

THE END OF THE MATTER

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Works by Norma Lorimer

Novels

THE SHADOW OF EGYPT

THE WHITE SANCTUARY

FALSE DAWN

THE MENDER OF IMAGES

THE YOKE OF AFFECTION

Travel

THE MEDITERRANEAN AND BEYOND

BY THE WATERS OF CARTHAGE

BY THE WATERS OF ITALY

THE END OF THE MATTER

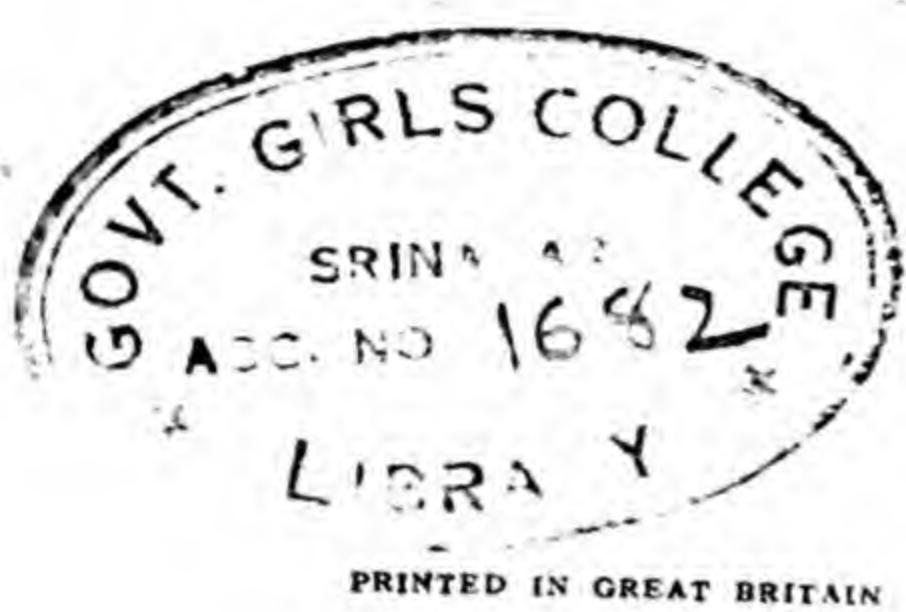
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CHAPTER I

How seldom an audience in a theatre, or a crowd of passengers embarking on a steamer, looks either interesting or attractive! At any rate, the audience at an interesting play or the passengers on a steamer bound for queer and interesting places. An Atlantic liner, like a musical comedy, would doubtless offer plenty of attractions in the way of *clothes*, if nothing more—a sort of fashion parade for the duration of the run, in either case!

So thought Patricia Paget, as she stood looking about her on the deck of the Lloyd Triestino steamship, *Helouan*, just leaving the port of Trieste for that of Alexandria.

Watching them idly, she summed up her fellow-passengers succinctly as "a ghastly crowd." Yet her judgment was hasty and ill-timed, for no one could be expected to look their best and brightest at the moment of embarkation, while anxiously seeing to the safe bestowal of their luggage, the lesser items in their cabins, and the bigger baggage in the hold.

Patricia herself was one of those lucky individuals who seem to arrive on board their boat at some propitious moment and in some mysterious manner unknown to the ordinary and less attractive voyager—favourites of the gods who never appear as units of any "ghastly crowd." As a matter of fact, she had come on board the night before, straight from the Blue Train in which she had crossed Europe to the Italian seaboard—"that heavenly Blue Train," as she called it, into which she had stepped at Calais, and out of which she had boarded the *Helouan* at Trieste. . . . "This way for the Blue Train!" Magical words which mean no customs, no change, nothing but comfort and ease and luxury all the way. Heavenly Blue Train—what a boon and a blessing you are to anxious travellers!

Having thus made her advent on the fastest boat that steams between Italy and Egypt, she could afford to regard with indifference the common herd around her. The journey being a mere trifle of three days, her fellow-passengers did not really matter very much. Indeed, did anything matter but the

blueness of the Adriatic and the gold of the sun flirting with the little islands and with the tall spires and towers of those clean white cities that punctuated the scenery? People *en masse* were neither here nor there.

But by three o'clock the next day, when she had become quite at home on the ship—a resident, so to speak—she found, surprisingly, that the “ghastly crowd” was separating into individuals, some of whom she judged to be “not so bad.” That she had, so far, held no converse with any of them was due, perhaps, rather to her little air of reservation than to their backwardness or her own wisdom. Patricia had not yet found wisdom, nor had she travelled sufficiently by sea to know that the first people you talk to on board the boat are usually those towards whom you preserve a chilly silence on leaving it. Easy-to-make acquaintances do not generally develop into very intimate and lasting friends.

No, Patricia was not an experienced sailor. Travelling by sea was a novelty to her, and sufficiently exciting in itself to require no human factor in addition. It was so thrilling to think that she had left London wrapped in a dreary foggy drizzle only two short days ago, and was now basking in brilliant sunshine—so brilliant indeed that it called for smoked-glass goggles.

Perhaps these disfiguring screens were not really a necessity, but as Patricia firmly settled them over her really adorable eyes, she thrilled at the remembrance of her efforts, at that selfsame hour two days previously, to see the other side of a gloomy street. Those smoked-glass atrocities stood, for her, as the sign and symbol of her escape from a hideously smutty and depressing world into a fairyland of beauty, clear atmosphere and exhilarating light.

The blue sea and the amazing sunshine were therefore, momentarily, all sufficient. She was pleased with herself for having come, more really pleased than she had ever been before. Even without such a goal as Palestine—without the purely personal and private reason of her adventure—a Reason that went by the name of Peter and was part and parcel of that foggy London atmosphere—she rejoiced that she had come.

But the enjoyment was at present purely superficial—a material delight in what lay around her. She knew nothing at all about the peoples and history of that coast along which she was being borne so easily and deliciously. The cities of the Adriatic, with which the sun was flirting, their stories and their citizens, were all a sealed book to her. White little towns, washed by blue waters, that was all they had to say to her as yet.

Pola she had never heard of. And Spalato, with its gigantic

Roman ruins, the work of that Emperor who made the last triumphal entry into Rome, appealed no more to her imagination, historically, than Blackpool or Brighton might have done, had she been passing them instead. Like Mark Twain's famous English traveller, she was going to Palestine, and she was not going to waste her thought and intelligence over anything she saw on the way.

Feeling, yes. The spell of the Adriatic held her, its lights and shadows, and that blue, blue water! The bluest water she had ever seen. She longed to dip her hand into it to satisfy herself that it was real. These were all making her *feel* with an intensity that was—without her knowing it—the beginning of her new self.

Her neat dark head was thrust well over the side of the vessel; her modernly slim body was lightly balanced against the iron bars that ran along the side of the ship, when a voice quite close to her said abruptly—"barked out the words," in fact, as Patricia said long afterwards:

"These fast steamers are the very deuce!"

Patricia started, and swung round to face the speaker.

A tall, thin, mahogany-toned man, rather like an Anglo-Arab in type, was looking through his binoculars, over her head, at the receding shore.

She quickly removed her glasses, and stared at him enquiringly.

"Why?" she asked. "What's the matter?"

"Spalato's the matter," he said briefly. "We're passing Spalato."

"Are we?" Patricia's voice showed how little Diocles Diocletian Jovius meant to her; that this Dalmatian-born conqueror of the third century who had played his great part in calling "Roman power into new life" and checked the ever-advancing wave of Teutonic invasion, did not call up for her a single vision. Diocletian was for her a Roman Emperor, and nothing more.

The lean extended arms were dropped. The man who held the binoculars looked quickly at the girl who had said "Are we?" with the same inflection as if he had told her that they were passing Margate Pier.

He had never imagined the possibility of anyone able to reach the Adriatic not having heard of Spalato. What did modern education teach girls? he wondered.

His scrutiny amused Patricia, who, being every inch a woman, soon perceived his scorn of her change to something very different. When she smiled she saw all his first impression of her vanish into thin air, and her feminine vanity was soothed by the altera-

tion. Instinctively she knew that—Spalato or no Spalato—she had, as a woman, found favour in his sight—and that sight, as she also instinctively knew, a critical one.

If he saw beauty in old stones, why should he not see it in young flesh and blood? Why not, indeed, when the girl's smile broke over the clear pallor of her face like southern sunshine over a pale landscape at dawn, in promise of a perfect day?

"If she's as ignorant as blazes," he said to himself, "she is beautiful, anyway, and exquisitely made, too."

And he wasn't such a fool as to mix up sheer ignorance with crass stupidity. Patricia's face almost hurt him with its intensity of expression. That was why her smile upset the man's cool criticism of her education.

But—womanlike again—Patricia pretended to misunderstand his gaze.

"You think I'm worth looking at," she said, with cool amusement, "because I'm not excited over Spalato—have obviously never even heard of it before. Well, I haven't, and I'm not going to pretend I have! . . . And believe me, you could find many more to stare at for that same reason, where I come from!"

Her voice was pleasing too, queer and a little husky, but individual, provocative.

He laughed. "Well, one just wonders why you are here." He threw out his slim brown hand towards the distant Spalato. "If it means nothing to you that Diocletian, the most famous of all the Emperors of the third century, not only came forth from Dalmatia to rule the world but went back to Dalmatia—to his palace in Spalato—to seek refuge when weary of the task of ruling it . . . Freeman's words," he added, "I have his book here"—tapping his bulging pocket; "he's splendid about this coast."

"Is he?" Patricia had heard of Freeman's History of England. She wondered if it was the same Freeman. She hadn't the foggiest idea.

Her companion read her thoughts. The tone of that "Is he?" was exactly the same as that of her previous "Are we?" He smiled, and his smile annoyed Patricia. Yet it wasn't cynical or sneering. Rather was it the smile of a man laughing inwardly at his own folly, questioning why a girl like that should be supposed ever to think about the Teutonic invasion of the Roman Empire and the part in it played by Diocletian, acknowledging that he himself would not give such matters much thought if he was much in her company—and vowing that he would take good care not to be!

"Just because I know nothing about the history of Dalmatia, you needn't take it for granted that it all means nothing to me, when I'm seeing a really blue sea for the first time, a really clear, unbroken light!" she said, a trifle resentfully. "Isn't that about enough for one day? Doesn't all this give quite a new meaning to *light*, to northern eyes?" She looked all round her. "It isn't quite an earthly light, is it?"

Her delight in all she saw, her capacity for feeling, had in it the pathos of youth. She was apparently tremendously affected by beauty. She was doomed to live on the edge of a volcano.

"I don't know," he answered, "for so far this earth has been my only home, and the light that beautifies it is the only light I know."

He smiled again, and when he smiled he looked less like an Anglo-Arab and more wholly the Britisher he was.

"I mean," Patricia explained, "it looks . . . oh! it's just so *un-English* that to me it doesn't seem quite real. It seems 'the light that never was on land or sea.' Perhaps it is that I don't feel quite real myself—as if all this was a dream." She smiled happily. "A very pleasant dream!"

"And yet, if it were, you could only see in your dream an *earthly* light," he argued. "Our dreams only show us things we have seen, distorted—magnified, or horrified, or beautified. They aren't really new experiences, you know. They do bear relation to what you have seen or felt or imagined. It would be wonderful to come across a dreamland book or picture or piece of music which dealt with something quite absolutely new, which bore no resemblance or relation in any way to anything that even a dreamer or a writer, or a painter, or a musician had ever had to do with. Scientific inventions are always achieved by development. The most imaginative book is only a new method of treating known matter, an old theme from a fresh point of view."

"I suppose so, but the mind that knows nothing about Spalato, and the drama of Diocles Diocletian Jovius, isn't likely to think about these things, is it?"

She smiled and her mouth was maddening. The quick way in which she had reeled off the Emperor's names intrigued him.

There was silence, and the binoculars were raised again and the coastline scanned. But while he was scanning it, the "Anglo-Arab," as Patricia had mentally dubbed him, was saying to himself: "She is intelligent. One doesn't talk like that to a fool; even if her mouth is unqualified temptation, a thing to keep well away from."

"No, please," Patricia said—for he had dropped his arms again—"do tell me about Spalato! Take pity on my ignorance!" Her voice suggested no shame of it. "I have no guide book—I came away in a great—Oh!" she stopped, "I beg your pardon."

He was sketching, making a rapid picture of a Greek Orthodox priest in his picturesque black robe and tall brimless hat, who had posed himself against one of the upright iron posts which helped to support the upper deck. Patricia and her companion were on the lower one.

The priest was reading his book of devotions; he was always reading it, it seemed to Patricia, except when he was taking covert glances at herself. Patricia had admired his picturesque figure, which always, consciously or unconsciously, chose exactly the right background to do it justice; and no doubt he had sensed her admiration. She did not want to leave the stranger who was sketching him, but convention demanded a move, and there was, of course, plenty to see elsewhere.

It was odd, she thought, how many quite possible people had emerged from the "ghastly crowd" of a few hours earlier. Some distinctly more than "possible." She wandered off round the speeding ship—what a pace it was going at, how soon she would be in Palestine!—Almost before she had made up her mind to go there, for so quickly had everything happened that she seemed to be on the ship before she had really actually decided to start.

As she went up and down, taking quick, critical glances at the groups of people who interested her most, she visualised her life in England, in cold, grey London which she had left so lately and which the sunshine of the Adriatic had already sent so very far away. Already she seemed to have lived quite a fair proportion of her life since she had left it.

"And how could I know anything about Spalato?" she asked herself impatiently, defensively. "Would *he* have known anything about it if he had lived the sort of life that I have? Would he have known anything about anything but church and tea-parties and tennis and—well—yes, now—Peter!"

She turned on her heel and walked more quickly.

Yes—there was Peter! Peter, the reason for her going to Palestine.

She felt a hot wave of guilt sweep over her. She had forgotten Peter.

Why did some men thrill you, and others leave you cold? Why didn't Peter thrill her? The lean, mahogany-toned Anglo-Arab was the sort that thrilled a woman. His was that irritating

This being the case, when the tragedy of her parents' death overtook her, she flung herself *faute de mieux* into the church work her aunt so genuinely enjoyed, and into an incessant orgy of church-going. All this pleased her aunt, and her aunt was the only person Patricia loved, or nearly loved . . . and what she needed more than anything else was an overdose of love.

The church which she had always attended with Miss Houston had moved with the times, on an upward grade, and Patricia had unquestioningly moved with it. Each successive curate, and the new vicar who was appointed about this time, seemed to the few remaining Protestants in the congregation to be drifting, closer to Rome. The clergy now styled themselves "priests," and introduced all manner of "Popish practices," such as vestments, and incense and bell-ringing during the Communion service—"Choral Eucharist" it was called—with rows of little acolytes in red cassocks and white cottas running about the steps of the altar. Patricia liked these innovations. The ritual and ornamentation brought a thrill and a sensuous beauty into her extremely loveless and colourless life. At school church-going had bored her; it never seemed to bore her or anyone else at St. Anselm's. And so she accepted thankfully what she did not trouble to examine, either for its actual meaning or for its relation to the teaching and ideas of Jesus. She never enquired how far these things would have appealed to the Founder of Christianity, as the best means of carrying on His preaching, or of fulfilling His burning desire to make men realise that the Kingdom of God is within them, His intense yearning to see them love one another. It was just all very pleasing and beautiful and helpful—amazingly helpful, as are all things which have as their goal a lofty ideal. The two "priests" were good men whom she admired enthusiastically; they seemed to her so spiritual and so bound up in their church that what they did and taught must surely be right. They must *know*!

The next event in Patricia's life was the death of her aunt, due to a severe chill caught at an early morning celebration of the Eucharist. Wet feet, an empty stomach, and just the condition of debility the waiting microbes wanted, and Patricia was left more orphaned than before. The fluttering out of that little grey life was not an overwhelming sorrow, for the girl had never had any passion of affection for her aunt, but it left her appallingly alone—threw her more ardently than ever into the arms of her church. . . . Oddly, the circumstances of Aunt Harriet's death reminded her of the story of a man who had his leg bitten by a dog while collecting subscriptions for the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. It seemed to her a grim bit of senseless

irony, on a par with that of her parents' death. . . . Why should she have lost both her parents by the stupidity of a man whose life her father had saved, and now her aunt through attendance at an early morning service in the church she had so loved ?

CHAPTER III

A YEAR had passed in this negative way, and at the end of it, following the law of nature, Patricia's womanhood began to assert itself, and she sought for pleasure and amusement outside the church environment. That environment had satisfied her adolescence, it had been her refuge from loneliness ; but now she wanted something else, something more than it could give her. What she wanted, of course, poor child, and did not know it, was the answer to the riddle of life, and here her church-going did, not help her. It had done nothing to assist her self development it had not taught her self-reliance, to "stand alone," as Middleton Murray calls it. For this, it seemed, she must look elsewhere, and turn her energies into other channels.

Sports had first suggested themselves. At school she had been good at games, and so she determined to take up tennis, choosing that in preference to golf, because at that time she was living in London with a distant cousin, and there tennis was the more easily obtainable game of the two. But she soon found that to be good at games means taking them and yourself seriously. They quickly cease to be just an amusement for leisure hours and become a mercilessly exacting business. Patricia found her tennis a very jealous god, of whose service she asked herself over and over again—was it worth it ? She never flattered herself into the belief that she might become a first-class player ; championships never entered into her ambitions ; but even to be good enough to take her part with good average players took her all her time. She found that keeping herself in form of any sort made enormous demands upon her energies, both physical and mental.

It was during this tennis-playing phase of her life that Patricia ran across Peter Armitage again, and discovered that this companion of her early childhood, the boy who had defended her on the many occasions when her passionate temper had got her

into a scrape, her playmate in many a game of "Shops" and "Horses" in the Broad Walk in Kensington Gardens, had suddenly grown into a young man.

The only son of an influential member of a large firm of manufacturing chemists in the North of England, Peter, who had done extremely well at Harrow and taken a very high degree in science at Cambridge, was expected by his father to come into the business. But the boy had other views. Chemicals and city life did not appeal to him; scientific agriculture and the country did. He attributed the decay of our rural prosperity to a lack of scientific knowledge, and determined to devote his energies and learning to the land, and to prove that, treated scientifically, agriculture would once again become a paying proposition in Britain, as elsewhere. He made his choice with his eyes open. If he became a member of his father's firm, he would, he knew, have every chance of acquiring considerable wealth before he had arrived at middle age, whereas his experiments in scientific agriculture would scarcely do more than cover their own expenses. He realised what he was giving up, but his love for the land and all that it stood for in English country life made the sacrifice worth while in his eyes.

They enjoyed dancing together, as well as playing tennis together, and they, too, enjoyed—well, just "playing about" together, as good comrades, on the old childhood's footing. It was something quite new and delightful for Patricia to have a companion of her own age with whom to "do things"; and even though it *was* just Peter, her child-friend grown up, it was of course far nicer to do all these things with a man who admired her than with a girl who didn't! Girls were always just a little jealous of Patricia.

This delightful state of affairs might have continued until they were both better able to judge for themselves and their feelings for each other, if it had not been for a wealthy uncle of Peter's who invited him to come to Egypt and Palestine with him. Then the trouble started. Suddenly something "different" came into Peter's comradely feeling for Patricia.

It came with his first serious consideration of his uncle's tempting offer—amazingly tempting to a nature like Peter's. If he accepted, it meant leaving Patricia. And Patricia was everything now, where before she had just been that jolly thing, his best girl friend. His best and only, indeed, for she had never bored him as other girls had done, by wanting too much of his attention. Now he found himself wishing that she had wanted more, that she would miss him terribly! He worried himself with wondering if she really minded his leaving her—and could by

no means convince himself that she did. Pals they were, but as to anything further . . . They both loved the country, of course, and their tastes were fairly similar. If she had not as yet shown many very pronounced tastes, she was so jolly intelligent that she was bound to do so later on. She was so lovely and so lovable, and some beastly chap would meet her and snatch her up while he was away! . . . Has not someone declared that there would be far fewer marriages if there were no fear of the loved one being married to someone else? The cave-man instinct, no doubt! Anyway, in Peter Armitage's *new* mind, that "someone else" was not to be tolerated for an instant. Now that he was going to leave her he found himself for ever thinking of her as a desired and desirable woman. The topping companion had become a thing disturbing and wonderful. The change in his feelings took place so completely and so naturally that he never questioned it or doubted for a moment that Patricia was his other half, the complement to his own nature, physically and mentally.

There was just one thing, certainly, upon which they did not agree, in which they could not see eye to eye, and that was "the Church." Peter was no "churchian," as he called it, although he hoped he was a Christian. He had as little patience and sympathy with what he considered "dead forms and ceremonies," as had Jesus with the empty letter of the Rabbinical law, after His baptism, when the Holy Spirit rested on His soul and the voice of the Father echoed around Him. From that memorable day until the day of His death, He waged war against the time-honoured and time-elaborated ceremonial of the Jews; and for that reason, if for no other, Peter could not understand the mentality of those Christians whose devotion to the ceremonies and ritual of their church seemed to efface the leader, to change entirely the personality of Jesus, so far as he understood these things.

He often wondered how it was that Patricia, with all her abundant common sense, with what he considered her modern mind, could derive both help and pleasure from the mediæval setting of her religion as personified in her church. He had been to St. Anselm's with her and had also enjoyed the elaborate pageant presented there, equally with herself. They had both been emotionally uplifted by the exquisite music and the piling up of "scenic effect." But each time, as he left the fine building after the ornate service, he had asked himself: "Where is Jesus in all this? Where is the Man of Galilee, who by His exquisite genius had proffered His teachings so simply that men had to hand them on through all ages and in all climes, that all might

have a chance of hearing and believing 'the wonderful works of God'?"

In what way, he wondered, did all this ritual and observance differ from that of the priests of Amon, whose many gods Moses tried his utmost to make the Children of Israel link into one, when they had lost almost all trace of their One and Jealous God of Israel, when that uncommunicable Name Jehovah had scarcely the slightest meaning in the minds of the people, who had lived so long in a land where every element of nature had taken upon itself the form of a god to be propitiated and worshipped with a splendour of form and ritual never surpassed.

Peter had refrained from speaking or arguing with Patricia about the "Anglo-Catholic" form of worship. Why should he do so? Had it not helped her and given her comfort in her lonely years? And besides, Peter was too intelligent to scorn anything that other people held sacred because he himself did not see eye to eye with them in the matter. He knew that no sane person could live without some form of worship. What, indeed, was his own delight in beauty but worship? He felt worship in his own desire to cultivate the earth and bring forth her increase. If Pat wanted and found help in ceremonial and a more concrete form of worship, that was just the way she saw things. He thought himself that it was wonderful there were so many different forms of religion, each in its own way helpful to so many different mentalities. After all, he told himself, they all meant the same thing. The actual form of each man's belief did not seem to him to matter in the very least, and that was why he had always left Patricia's belief, and other people's beliefs, alone.

Therefore when he asked her to marry him, it came with a shock that Patricia should say sadly: "But how can we? We don't see alike on religious questions. You don't think it matters, Peter. I do. It matters tremendously."

That was within a week of his actual departure for Egypt.

Up to that moment Patricia had not thought about loving Peter, certainly not about marrying him. But now that he spoke about leaving her, now that the very day was in sight, she began wondering if any of her *liking* for him was really *love*. She knew herself so little, and she knew even less about love. Peter was the first man who had ever told her that he loved her. But there was one thing she thought she knew, and that was that he could never respond to the religious side of her nature.

Patricia used the word "religious" without yet knowing what it meant. She did not imagine herself to be deeply religious by nature. Often, indeed, she was miserably conscious of how little her church-going affected her daily life and character. Naturally

of a kind and amiable disposition, she was not any more so because of her beliefs. She did not try to hate her enemies a whit less because of the Divine command to love them. If she received an insult, she did not turn the other cheek, in accordance with the gospel mandate. Rather, she wanted madly to hit back again, and was only restrained from doing so by the influence of a wise upbringing and the knowledge of what a *lady*—not a *Christian*—does not do. All the same, the Christian tradition and faith were the pillars of her mentality and a part of her “wise upbringing.” And she was sincere enough to deplore the fact that Peter simply left such matters alone. Even in their friendship it had always hurt her, but she had managed to push the unwelcome knowledge to the back of her mind, not to let it trouble the pleasant peace of this companionship. But she could not brush it aside so easily now, when it had come to a question of a more intimate union. It would surely be almost as absurd to marry a man who did not take any interest in her religion, as to link her lot with a foreigner whose language was utterly unknown to her and hers to him. What soul-union, what spiritual communion could there be between them, if she allowed herself to take such a step? *Allowed herself*, mark you! She had not definitely determined to refuse him.

“I know, Pat, darling, we don’t think alike,” he had answered her, “but we don’t really differ as much as you imagine.”

“I think we differ entirely; I wish we didn’t!” was her obstinate retort.

“Not from *my* point of view,” Peter insisted quickly. “There are so many roads to heaven, Pat.”

“But you haven’t any point of view, that’s just it. And as for roads——”

“I have a very strong point of view!” he protested. “And it’s extremely like yours, only differently expressed. Differently presented to our consciousness.”

“I don’t see how it can be.” She paused. “You say you see God in everything, practically; that if you are admiring a flower or the sunset you are worshipping them. God, you say, is in Nature—but where is your Christ? Where in this Supreme Power is the comfort of the Christ Who died for us, the Christ of my religion, the very Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary? Where does His love come in, in your conception of God?”

Peter frowned, a little baffled by her questions.

“I don’t know, Pat. I’ve never argued about this sort of thing, never discussed it, even. It’s always seemed to me so much easier and happier just to leave such matters alone, to trust to one’s own consciousness, as it were, what one *feels*.

about it. Something like this: that Christ is in us, that we ourselves have the power to save ourselves; it rests with ourselves, having the Divine within us."

"Easier?" Patricia opened her eyes very wide, lifted her delicately-pencilled brows. "But Peter, dear, it's frightfully difficult, just terrible. . . . Not *easy*!"

"Why?" he said simply.

The girl's eyes filled with tears. Peter had never seen her cry. It was awfully disturbing.

"The ghastly loneliness," she said, then paused. "A Supreme Being, or whatever you call your God—wouldn't have helped me when I was left all alone! And—I've been so alone, Peter! So cold, so shivered! Poor dear Aunt Harriet was *kind*, of course, very, very kind, so far as she knew how—but"—she gave a wry little smile—"that wasn't very far! And—"

Tears threatened her voice. Peter put his arms round her, comfortingly. She felt the comfort, liked the warm embrace. But her argument persisted.

"I don't see how you can think we see alike, for it—it's Christ I care most about, and you don't see Him—not my suffering Christ, Who understands and feels for our human suffering I think too little about God—God the Father, I mean. Often I doubt His loving kindness. I do! And then, when I think of His Son, Jesus, as being one with God the Father, I see that Father's sacrifice and His love—and it comforts me. I don't see how you can expect me to see God in the way you do, as some abstract vague force of Nature—it's horrible! So hard and cold and—oh, terrible! Our beliefs aren't one bit alike. Not one bit! I want something warm, something with human sympathy—alive and real!"

She tried to free herself from his compelling arms. There certainly was human sympathy in them—of a sort—but all the same she knew he did not really sympathise, in the strict literal sense of the word.

"I don't see how you can expect ~~me~~ to see God as you do!" she repeated. "I don't pretend to be strong enough to do without some help which is outside of myself—myself's so dependent."

"You may one day, Pat." Peter spoke thoughtfully.

"Or *you* may come to see as *I* see!" she flashed back. "You are going to Palestine—lucky you!—surely there you must either believe tremendously more, or not believe at all when you have been there!"

"I wonder?" Peter spoke earnestly, for he had no desire to make the breach between them wider, but in reality he felt

convinced that going to Palestine would not do for him what Patricia so evidently hoped it would do.

"You see," she went on, "there isn't really very much to be got out of a life like mine if you haven't any definite and personal religion—I mean a personal comforting and sympathetic religion. I always envy Roman Catholics, really ardent ones, for they are the only people who seem to get happiness and enjoyment from their beliefs. And why shouldn't religion give us that, if it's all that the Church says it is? Why shouldn't we enjoy it?"

"If it's all that the Church says it is, how do we remain sane?" argued Peter. "Why do we go on living the lives we do?" Again he spoke earnestly. "I often wonder how ardent believers remain sane—why the war didn't drive them mad."

"I don't know." Patricia shook her head. "Only I do know that your religion hasn't anything helpful in it; and how can I marry a man who can't help me, Peter?" She hesitated. "You know what I mean, don't you? I want my husband's faith to buck up mine. I'm such a rotter really. I need always to be with someone who believes tremendously, who will help me to get—well, get what I see Mr. Maitland gets from his religion." She sighed. Mr. Maitland was her High Church vicar. "He's *in love with*—"

"Maitland's in love with his church," Peter interrupted her.

"Oh, more than that, Peter! He's so perfectly splendid, and so lovely to the poor people in his parish. And it must be marvellous to think life wonderful and thrilling, as he does. I've only tried it for twenty-one years, and it's mostly been boring to me, horribly boring—just think of it. I often go out and buy silly things I don't need and never wear just for something to do."

"But couldn't our life together be wonderful, Pat? Absolutely thrilling? If you love the country, and I know you do, my work will give you just the interests you need. We'll work together, darling, and find all the thrills in life. There is nothing in the world like farm work, modern scientific farming; working hand in hand with nature."

She shook her head. "No—no. I—couldn't, Peter."

"Why not?"

"If I married you now—oh, I can't! Give me more time to think about it! When you're away I'll want you frightfully, so frightfully that I suppose when you come back I'll marry you." She smiled wearily. "And if I marry you"—she shook her head—"it won't be fair to you. No"—she gave another, more emphatic, shake—"it won't!"

"But why, Pat?"

"Because I don't think it would be love. It's sheer loneliness with me, all the time. That's what's the matter with my religion. I just throw myself at the Church, appeal to its pity, because I'm bored, because I'm so damnably lonely. Of course Miss Cresswell says it's God I want. . . . Anyhow, whatever I want. I don't think you can give it to me."

"Is it God Miss Cresswell meant, Pat, or just the Church with its ritual and its music and its sensuous appeal to your emotions? The story of the Church is so romantic, its appeal is so dramatic . . . but *is it God?* Is all this making you any more Christ-like? Are you any nicer for being a 'churchian'?"

Patricia's eyes had suddenly a trapped, hunted expression. They betrayed her unacknowledged inward fear. Peter had put into words a secret insidious doubt of her own mind. Did her religion make her any nicer, one bit more Christ-like?

"Oh, I don't know, Peter. I don't know! Don't go saying the things I've tried not even to think! If I let myself think whether Christianity has proved itself to be a practical religion, an everyday working and workable faith, I make myself perfectly miserable. I feel hysterical over it—idiotic! To be really more Christ-like it seems to me that I would have to do without for ever all the things I want so badly, the things I've never had."

"My darling, forgive me!"

Patricia forgave him by allowing herself to be kissed. She let Peter hold her closely in his arms—and oh, how nice it was! How frightfully nice and restful! Its restfulness dragged big quivering sighs from her relaxed body; made her think this might be love! She had never been kissed before. Never—except by female relatives.

When at last Peter reluctantly freed her, he said exultantly: "Now, darling, we are engaged, aren't we? I can go to Egypt happily?"

He looked into her eyes—eyes that his kisses had so queerly changed and deepened. Patricia clung to him.

"If we are to be engaged," she breathed, "don't go! Oh, don't go! I shall be just as lonely as ever."

"I shall only be gone a very little while, dearest."

His arms held her again, closely, possessively. Her distress delighted him. She really did want him! Wanted his love so much that he persuaded himself that she loved him.

Patricia pulled herself away. While his arms were round her and his lips were pressed on hers she was not her normal self. Already a lover's kisses were telling her something about herself—something she had never known before. In that close embrace she had the feeling that her limbs were water, that she

was slipping away from dreary reality, becoming a part of a strange super-existence that knew neither form nor matter, a condition such as she imagined the future life might be. But having freed herself from this spell of physical contact, her ego began once more to assert its independence of thought.

"No, no! I won't be engaged until you come back." She spoke with an attempt at calm wisdom.

"Then I won't go." Peter too spoke decisively. His voice completed the return of the girl's splendid commonsense.

"Oh, but you must!" she exclaimed. "You can't let your uncle down at the last moment. He's taken your tickets for the whole tour!"

"Then say you'll be engaged! Ah—do say it, Pat!" He caught her two hands in his own. "You would, if you loved me, darling. You wouldn't want to let me go away miserable."

Did she, or did she not? He searched her eyes. A few moments ago he had seen a look of passion in them. Now the flame had waned; they looked loveless.

Patricia was sorry for him. Sorry because of the thrill she had felt when he kissed her and held her so closely, and because of her secret knowledge that that thrill was not love. He had burned her, and alarmed her by revealing her to herself, but he was not the mate her soul was seeking. She was certain of that—but would she ever meet the man who would satisfy her double personality? Was she perhaps rejecting the substance for the shadow, and honest reality for an elusive dream?

She could not tell, and so she answered slowly: "I *think* I must love you, Peter. Surely I must!" She blushed, and then added a cautious rider: "I think I should know better if—well—" Her voice dropped into silence.

"If I believed in all the things that you believe in? Is that the hindrance?"

"Perhaps, yes . . . I . . . I think so. Anyhow, it would help my love . . . and I do so want to believe more and not less!"

"And you think with me you would believe less?" he said.

"Yes. Because yours is the stronger will. My faith would peter out, anyhow at first—" She spoke cynically.

"At first we'd both be just contented with love-making and enjoying ourselves," he assured her. "We wouldn't worry about anything else—our faith or what not. Faith," he added slowly; "a Japanese once said to me: 'Faith is the belief in things that are obviously untrue.' *Obviously!* That was a clever word to use. I mean, of course, faith in creeds and doctrines, not the faith which is a part of our divine being."

Patricia did not catch the subtlety. "Faith," she insisted

gently, "is the most wonderful thing in the world just because it *isn't* obvious." She put her hands on Peter's shoulders. "And I haven't got it, Peter! I always suspected that I hadn't, and now . . . oh, Peter! I believe that love-making would do me just as well! Do you know what I mean?"

She looked up into his eyes, then laid her face against his breast.

"I never knew I was like that," she whispered in muffled tones. "I never knew I should love being kissed and loved, just for kissing and loving's sake."

"Dearest, it's adorable of you. Exquisitely human!"

"Oh no, it *isn't*!" She resisted his embrace. "It *isn't* exquisite, Peter." She looked at him with something like fear in her eyes. "I was just getting from your kisses what I've been trying to get from the Church. I have . . . Oh, Peter! I'm not a bit what you think I am. I'm not!"

"You're a darling, and you love me, that's all about it. And isn't the whole world crying out for love?"

"But I don't know—I don't know one bit if it's real lasting love or if it's just ritual and incense and music and lights in another form. If I had had a lover should I ever have wanted the Church with its ceremonial and elaborate services? Should I ever have had much to do with any church, given it any of my time or devotion?"

"Don't be silly, dearest. You're only human. There are two people in all of us. Different things appeal to each of our personalities."

"But—do you understand?—I'm not strong enough to do without established beliefs, and so I believe," she spoke protestingly, "I really *do* believe, Peter . . . and yet, sometimes, I come out in a cold sweat when I suddenly see myself without a scrap of belief, with no reason for anything—the biggest thing taken from me, the bottom suddenly dropped out of my basket of eggs. . . . I've had those moments"—she spoke more quietly—"and then I've drowned them in church-going."

"You can't have 'no beliefs' for long, Pat. No man has ever been quite without faith for any length of time, whatever people may say or think. Our beliefs are our human consciousness. What you felt was just nerves!" Peter smiled. "Try to think of any human being without any sort of belief—and you can't. The scalps round the necks of the head-hunters, even, are the tokens of their very living faith."

"Oh yes. But"—Patricia shook her head—"your idea of belief is too far off for me, too unsympathetic. I want to

keep my belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. I want our dear Lord Who died and suffered for me—for me as I know myself to be. I want to keep my belief in the God Who sent His Son into the world that I, Patricia Paget, who matters so much to herself, might have life everlasting—and a happy one! A brighter one than I have here. I want the same Christ Who gives such happiness to Mr. Maitland. A belief in Christ's love such as that which makes his face shine with something which you know to be goodness and happiness and truth. That's what I want. The romantic and dramatic Christ of the Cross, if you choose to call it so, not the reasonable, logical thing that you are satisfied with . . . the divine in yourself put there for the working out of your own salvation. And I *do* believe in what Mr. Maitland believes in from . . . well . . . I'm frightened not to believe!"

"I won't put any hindrance in the path of your believing, Pat. Whatever will add to your real happiness I'll do my best to give you, and help you to get."

"Faith is beyond any lover's power to give, Peter. It's a case of having it or not having it." She paused. Then, in a low tone, she added shyly: "When I've imagined that my Saviour's arms were round me—and I have imagined it—I've had just the same heavenly feeling that I had just now when your arms were round me. I've wanted to be lost in His arms in the way I felt I was losing myself in yours. . . . Is that wicked, Peter? Is that low or high?" She smiled into his eager eyes. "How difficult it is to understand even the simplest things about ourselves, to know if we love or we don't love, to know whether our feelings come from above or below! Just *being* makes the dullest and simplest life a problem."

"Darling, there is one thing I know"—he caught her and held her; he thought he knew, poor Peter!—"I adore you, and I can't leave you!"

But since Patricia as yet did not know her own mind, she sent him away to Egypt with nothing more than the earnest of her lips as a foretaste of things to come.

CHAPTER IV

AND that was why Peter set out on his travels a free man. Patricia had her own way. No engagement, nothing at all definite between them until he returned.

Then an odd thing happened. Patricia suddenly made up her mind to go to Palestine too.

A fellow worker in the parish, the Miss Cresswell of whom she had spoken to Peter, and who had been her aunt Harriet's greatest friend, was going with the Anglo-Catholic pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and she begged Patricia to join the party.

At first Patricia firmly refused to do any such thing. She had seen pilgrimages—Roman Catholic ones—in Switzerland and elsewhere, and they had not appealed to her. She had no desire to go to Palestine with a "gang," even with a religious gang, and she knew that much that the ardent Anglo-Catholics would want to do she would not care for doing. Indeed, she never called herself any sort of a Catholic, and still thought of the Church of England as the Protestant Church.

But the idea of going to Palestine, *per se*, took root in her mind. She had turned down Miss Cresswell's suggestion, but the seed had fallen on fertile ground.

Peter was on his way there; Miss Cresswell would be there. And in Palestine one would surely, as she had said to Peter, either believe wholly or not believe at all. Settle things, anyway, once for all.

Of course she could go quite independently of the "gang" and yet benefit by having Miss Cresswell at hand, in case of emergency. Not as a chaperone, of course! No one would expect a modern girl to require chaperoning at twenty-two! And the mere thought of the Holy Land and chaperones in conjunction made Patricia laugh aloud. A chaperone in the Holy Land . . . what an absurd combination!

It is wonderful how quickly an idea can develop, given the right environment. What had at first seemed improbable and almost ridiculous soon became reasonable and highly probable. The mustard-seed of Miss Cresswell's sowing had grown into a spreading tree. How little Patricia dreamed at that time of the shadows its branches were to cast on the landscape of her life.

She began to think that she must always have intended going to Jerusalem whenever she should be completely her own mistress. She scarcely remembered at all how she had scouted the idea when first her aunt's friend had suggested it, only ten days or so earlier; that it had struck her as absurd and undignified to go, as it were, "chasing after Peter." Now she felt she was going to Palestine because Palestine would give her what she needed, and if Peter were there, so much the better and the nicer to meet him. The matter had assumed its correct proportions in her mind's eye.

Money makes modern travelling extremely easy, and Patricia, as has been said, was a well-off young woman. All she had to do, therefore, was to visit the London offices of the Italian State Railway, and explain there just what she wanted to do.

The next thing she found herself doing, so it seemed to her, was walking from the boat at Calais into the Blue Train, the "Oriental Express," which was to take her straight through, without let or hindrance, to Trieste. Going by this luxurious train saved her the usual abomination of the Customs at Calais, and at the frontier. In fact, it conveyed her like a princess in a fairy tale on wings of comfort to the Adriatic port.

At Trieste she had been just a little nervous about leaving the train and embarking on the boat. But she was met at the station by an interpreter in the Company's service and driven straight to the ship.

For long afterwards Patricia was to visualise that drive through quiet, deserted streets and squares, where waggons and lorries were neatly parked for the night. Everything was so tidy and so orderly and so perfectly organised that she had to keep on saying to herself, "Yes—this is Italy. Trieste now belongs to Italy!" What a clatter the horses' feet made on the cobble-stones as they drove through the still yards and open spaces, with the funnels of ships and tall masts drawing nearer and nearer; it seemed absurd that all the row was for her, and almost unbelievable that this was her last link with Europe. To-morrow she would be speeding to Asia. What would have happened to her, she wondered, before she set foot in Europe again? What would she think about and feel?

It seemed mysterious and unreal that she should be driving all alone, at almost midnight, with a strange man, through the deserted regions of a strange city, to embark on a very strange steamer for a very strange land. For, however familiar the words "Holy Land" are to the civilised world, she knew that there would be intensely strange things awaiting her there. Things she could not put into words. Things spiritual as well as things temporal.

The interpreter who had met her was an elderly and extremely nice man, who had, of course, being an Italian, mentally arranged Patricia's private affairs in his own very human and Italian way. She was obviously going to Egypt to marry some official there—an officer, probably, in the British Army. He secretly congratulated the unknown young man. Patricia fulfilled his ideal of a perfect bride. She had dignity as well as beauty, and, unlike most English girls, she had temperament—*simpatica*. More than once he had exerted himself to provoke her mirth,

just for the pleasure of seeing her smile. Patricia's smile contradicted her habitual expression, it brought to the surface gleams of a hidden fire. Men were more affected by it than women; it was the concrete expression of that inexplicable attraction, that subtle power over their feelings which some women possess for men. . . . But a woman who smiles like that smiles infrequently. She does not belong to the Sunshine Brigade.

It was about the same date that Patricia began her voyage down the Adriatic that Peter got her letter in Cairo, c/o Messrs. Thos. Cook & Son, telling him that they would meet in Jerusalem.

CHAPTER V

WHEN at length she was tired of walking round the boat and quizzing her fellow-passengers, Patricia returned to the spot where she had left the sunburnt stranger.

Never had she seen an Englishman tanned to so dark a hue. But he certainly was—well, if not exactly good-looking, at least good to look at, with his indefinable air of breeding which had impressed her from the start as subtly suggestive of "the stately homes of (pre-war) England," that innate grand manner, the envy and despair of our own new-rich commercial classes, yet, curiously, common alike to Italian peasant and desert Arab. . . . Desert Arab? . . . Yes, that was it, undoubtedly! Tall and lean, and clean-limbed—the whites of his eyes and his strong white teeth standing out luminously in his tanned face—he was the embodiment of her idea of an Arab sheik. . . .

As she came up he shut his sketch book, slipped it into his coat pocket, and, without speaking, fell, unexpectedly, into step beside her. . . . He had, you must remember, seen her smile.

Yet for a little while he said nothing. The man was going against his better judgment—poor foolish moth, that smile had lured him, if not to destruction, at least to danger, and when a cautious male thing is annoyed with his own weakness, he is apt, unconsciously, to vent his anger upon his companion, to subside, in fact, into a grumpy silence.

Patricia was quite alive to the situation, pleasantly and

amusedly alive. The most foolish woman understands a man far better than another man can do—and Patricia was by no means foolish. She knew all she was ever to know about Francis Daubigny—the hidden Francis—almost at once; knew that she could make mincemeat of his waning aloofness, if she so chose—though as yet she did not know that she did choose. A little smile flickered in her eyes as they strolled on silently side by side.

It was Daubigny who broke the silence, with a sudden, abrupt question.

"Are you going to friends in Jerusalem?"

Like the interpreter at Trieste, he supposed she was going out to be married, visualised the ceremony at St. George's cathedral, and supplied the regulation officer bridegroom.

"No," Patricia said, then after a moment's hesitation, "not to friends, but I hope to meet some . . . one friend . . . who has gone to Palestine and Syria with the Anglo-Catholic pilgrimage."

"Oh?" He smiled, and looked at her critically.

"Why do you smile?" she asked rather resentfully. She had not forgotten his scorn about Spalato, his first "bark."

"I was just visualising the crowd she will be going about with . . . I suppose it's a 'she'! . . . Cockle-shells suspended by a ribbon round their necks—true 'palmer' style."

"Do they really do that?" Patricia thanked her stars she wasn't with them, if so. She detested cranks.

"I've seen lots of them. They look very earnest, and I hope they are very happy!" Again Daubigny smiled.

Patricia frowned a little. Pilgrims didn't attract her; it was a bore to think of running up against them all the time.

"I suppose I shall run up against them," she said, speaking her thoughts aloud, rather lugubriously. "Hundreds of them—in Palestine. I never thought of that."

"Thousands," he assured her gravely, but with a faint twinkle in his eye. What a funny little thing she was, never to have thought of it! "Thousands, if you spend any time there. Every sort and condition of pilgrim, with every sort and condition of mind about Jerusalem, and every sort and condition of hatred of each other! . . . But, may I ask you, where are you going to put up? The Hotel St. John is the best, of course."

"Then of course I shall stay there," she said calmly.

"You've engaged your room?"

"No, I never thought it would be necessary. I took it for granted I'd get in—er—*somewhere*."

He looked aghast at her ignorance of travel conditions in Palestine at that time of the year.

"*Somewhere*—you might, but you wouldn't like it. At this season Jerusalem is crowded. All the possible hotels are booked up to the hilt. Everyone wants to come for Easter, and they stay on and see all there is to be seen—'do' the Holy Land, in fact. . . . And for another sort of traveller, this is the wild-flower season."

"Oh? And are the wild flowers very lovely?" Patricia's eyes glowed.

"Yes, wonderful. The loveliest thing about Palestine, in my opinion."

Patricia looked at him in astonishment. "Really? D'you mean that?"

"Certainly. You mustn't expect beautiful scenery, or you're going to be disappointed. But no one could be disappointed in the wild flowers. They are well worth going to see."

Patricia was silent. Scenery didn't seem to matter . . . or even flowers . . . it was the crowds that bothered her. She was disturbed at the prospect of not getting a room at the best hotel.

Daubigny seemed to guess her thoughts, for his next words were concerned with them.

"Where is your Anglo-Catholic friend putting up?"

"I don't know. I never bothered to ask her!" She laughed. "I never thought about it being difficult to get a room. . . . I suppose you'll be asking yourself what on earth I did think about in starting out. If I didn't think about the ruins of Diocletian's palace, you'll say, I might at least have thought about my own bedroom!" She looked quizzically at him.

"You certainly travel rather casually," he answered. "Don't you agree?"

"Um . . . perhaps," she admitted. "But I hate fussing."

"You'll hate still more not finding a room in Jerusalem."

Daubigny paused, as if weighing some matter in his mind. Then—"I'll give you an address," he said, "which may help you if you can't get in at St. John's Hotel." He took out his wallet and wrote a few lines on the back of a card. "If you take this to the Casa Nova—the Franciscan Hospice—I know one of the fathers there; he's an old friend of mine and he'll do what he can for you. He'll take you in somehow."

Patricia thanked him. . . . He wished she wouldn't smile like that—there were two idle days to be got through.

"Are you going to Jerusalem?" Her voice invited.

"Not just at present. But I have work that will take me there in a week or two. I want, if I can, to stay for a few days on Mount Carmel—that's my favourite place in Palestine—in the country round the Sea of Galilee . . . unspoilt Palestine."

"Oh, then you know it all well?"

"I walked into Jerusalem with Allenby."

Patricia's eyes betrayed new interest in the man beside her,

"You're a soldier?" she said. It was hardly a question.

"I was, at that time—a war-time soldier. Now I'm doing a civilian job."

Again her eyes glowed. "It all sounds so extraordinary!"

"Extraordinary? What? How?"

"Hearing you speak about these strange places as if they were real places where people—real people—live and have jobs!"

She laughed, a little shamefacedly.

"I'm on my way to Jerusalem, and really I have scarcely thought about the fact that it is now under British control—that people who have their work there must get accustomed to living in Nazareth and Galilee and Bethlehem!" She sighed. "I haven't got Jerusalem as a human place yet. It's still 'Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blessed'—a sort of future state, not a town with hotels and British officials. . . . I really can't fit British officials into the picture of jasper-paved streets and—and . . . well—the last scene in the Tragedy."

"Why feel so oppressed about it?" argued Daubigny. "Jerusalem is paved with tragedy, not jasper, I assure you. Its history is one long-drawn-out tragedy; but Palestine, Galilee, for instance, holds so much of the other side of the picture. . . . You'll know what I mean when you get there. I don't mean its towns and holy sites, they have the same atmosphere as Jerusalem—they are spoilt, for me, anyway, by the sectarian rivalry, obliterating the fundamental principles of the common creed, each worshipping according to their own limited mentality. . . . I don't fancy you'll like Nazareth or Bethlehem, but you won't be able to resist the charm of Mount Carmel, and the peculiar attraction of the Sea of Galilee."

Patricia laughed softly.

"Nazareth and Mount Carmel!" she repeated. "They haven't materialised for me at all yet. They are still just 'in the Bible.' Oh, dear me!"—the laugh, which had been half a groan, ended in a big sigh—"when I think of all the places and things I've got to see and do, I feel like turning back again! I've a sort of fear that if I feel it in the right way, I'll burst with feeling—expand like a green water-frog and go pop! . . .

Do you ever feel that if we really and truly believed in all the things we think we do, we should burst or go mad?"

He laughed the warm laugh she liked.

"Personally I don't even think I believe in the sort of things that would make me burstful. . . . You're pretty keen on it all, aren't you?"

"Yes, naturally. You mean—about what Palestine means to us all?"

He interrupted her.

"I mean—orthodoxly you're keen. You're going to see it all through the eyes of your Church—through the Jews' interpretation of God, and the Church's cult of Jesus, which was of course a Jewish cult from the beginning."

"Well, I suppose so. Why not?"

"I hope you won't be disillusioned."

"I don't see why I should be. Though I can't banish the 'land of milk and honey' from my sentimental visualisation, I really do know that I won't see a Biblical city—if that's what you mean?"

"Oh, but you will, in a way. Palestine is still Biblical enough for anything—even Jerusalem is Biblical, except for its buildings—the Mosque of Omar, for instance, one of the most beautiful things in the world, instead of the ornate Jewish Temple of Solomon, which I'm sure I shouldn't have liked! The people haven't changed, you see. The Orient never really does change. It has to conform outwardly, sometimes—but at heart it remains the same. People shudder when they speak of 'trains in Palestine' and hotels and all that sort of thing—'modern innovations' . . . it's all nonsense. The train isn't within sight of Jerusalem."

"Then why do you think I'll be disillusioned?"

"I don't say you *will* be—only you *may* be. You may get your illusion shattered by your fellow-Christians—most of them being as *un*-Christlike as anything to be found in Palestine. I think they have done more harm to the cause they profess to uphold in the East than anyone could believe unless they had lived there. Eastern Christianity must surely be a danger to the faith of many earnest pilgrims. . . . But I don't want to tell you anything unpleasant about Jerusalem."

"You like it?"

"I know no other city, except Rome, that has the same charm for me. If I had to settle down, and couldn't afford to live comfortably in England, I could make my home in either city quite happily."

"I can't imagine a home in Jerusalem!"

They smiled simultaneously—the words sounded somehow

paradoxical—yet through Patricia's mind flashed a verse of a familiar hymn :

" Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me,
When shall my labours have an end,
Thy joys when shall I see ? "

She murmured the words spontaneously.
Daubigny shook his head.

" You can't imagine anything about the Jerusalem of to-day until you have seen it. Your Jerusalem knew not Saladin. Your Jerusalem has outside its walls a lonely Mount of Calvary. You can't yet visualise Jerusalem without seeing pictures you've built up in your own mind as a stage setting for Biblical incidents. You are content to erase the Jerusalem of the Romans—I don't mean Herod, he fits into your picture all right—but the Christian Emperors, the Jerusalem of the Saracens, of the Crusaders, even of the Turks whom Allenby turned out. Yet all these aspects of Jerusalem are part of her history, of her tragedy. You can't just chop them off as extraneous details. . . ."

He paused to shoot a sidelong rather quizzical glance at Patricia's troubled face. She was, as a matter of fact, feeling considerably disturbed, for the simple reason that Daubigny was quite right. She had been content to obliterate everything subsequent to the New Testament in her contemplation of Jerusalem—of Palestine as a whole.

" Then," he went on, " you must remember that all through the centuries Jerusalem has been a sacred and holy city to the Jews—and that Mohammedans do not associate it only with Christianity, don't look on it merely as a sort of museum of the Bible Tragedy. For them, and for everyone else, it is a real live and extremely busy city. The Jerusalem of Jesus and His friends lies twenty to eighty feet under the streets you will tread."

" Then"—Patricia mused—" Jeremiah was pretty correct when he foretold that ' the city shall be builded upon her own heap ' ! "

" As most cities of that age are," Daubigny assented, " It's the same with the Forum in Rome, although no prophet foretold that. The excavators never seemed to come to an end of the different strata of Roman civilisation."

They had stopped instinctively at the entrance to the stairway leading down to the dining saloon. A bell had sounded for afternoon tea—that concession to the travelling Briton !

Before they parted, Daubigny said laughingly: " I'd better

warn you right here that you won't get *Helouan* cooking or luxury in any shape or form in the Casa Nova."

"I don't mind that—but is it *clean*?" Patricia spoke a little anxiously.

"Oh, absolutely! Spartanly, simple and puritanically clean. Remember, it's a convent."

"That's all I care about. You can always buy luxuries to supplement Spartan meals, can't you?"

"Oh? You think so?"

He lifted his hat, and left her, with an amused smile playing round his fine lips. And as he watched her running down the stairs, he murmured to himself: "You can always buy luxuries—can you, young lady? I'd like to see you buying what you would consider luxuries in Jerusalem! Vegetables in David Street you'll find in plenty—if they fill the bill for you!"

CHAPTER VI

FOR the remainder of the voyage Patricia, to her secret chagrin, saw very little of Francis Daubigny. His personality interested her, he made a pleasantly disturbing appeal to her senses—though she did not admit this latter fact—and she was subconsciously irritated by the knowledge that, unless she deliberately overstepped the bounds of convention, she was not going to have that "good time" with him that their first encounter seemed to promise. . . . Three idle days on shipboard give splendid opportunities for enjoying yourself with an interesting companion! Moreover—and this was the crowning grievance to a pretty and attractive woman—she was convinced, and rightly, that he was avoiding her of set purpose and malice aforethought, though for what reason she could not imagine.

It was surely she who should have done the avoiding stunt—if Peter's happiness was to be considered, that is. . . . Yes, but—it wasn't! Had she not embarked upon this journey primarily and above all to find out what were her true feelings for Peter? She hadn't bound herself down by any promise, so that Peter's happiness or unhappiness didn't come into the matter at all. . . . And wasn't it advisable to see as much as she could of other men who attracted her—she had met so few!

—to have what are called “harmless flirtations” with them, just by way of finding out—just to learn what she could about herself? Peter’s first kisses had given her furiously to think. Perhaps other men’s . . .

Patricia reddened, and reined in her racing thoughts. This aloof stranger was sticking too tightly to her mind.

That was another thing that annoyed her. He, in his aloofness, stuck—and others, more friendly, didn’t.

As—for instance—that young demi-god who had emerged quite definitely from the “ghastly crowd” of her first hasty judgment, and who answered to the romantic name of Louis Tricoupi. He was the best-looking man she had ever seen in her life, and yet his handsome features and splendid proportions—the figure, as she told herself, of some ancient Greek Marathon prize-winner—did not make anything like the same appeal to her as did the personality and physique of the “Anglo-Arab,” Francis Daubigny.

Perhaps Tricoupi was too good-looking? Not that there was any trace of the “pretty-pretty” young man about him, or any suggestion of effeminacy. He just seemed too perfect physically to be taken quite seriously. . . . Little imperfections are very intriguing to women . . . in a man, that is to say. They are less tolerant of the shortcomings of their own sex.

He was, too, a very “mixed bag.” Patricia was too thoroughly English herself to be quite pleased with that. The blend of half a dozen nationalities in one person was a trifle upsetting to her line of demarcation. One ought to be one thing—or even two, half-and-half—not a perfect kaleidoscope! A perfect Tower of Babel, linguistically! It seemed to her that no language was unknown to him—including Gum Arabic!—no country was there that he could not claim as his.

A Cypriot of Greek extraction on his father’s side, he had had on his mother’s a Yorkshire grandmother and a French grandfather—the only son of a Huguenot refugee in Smyrna, of all places. This grandfather had amassed an immense fortune in commerce in the city of his father’s adoption, and had married the daughter of an equally “warm” fellow-merchant—a Yorkshireman trading in Smyrna. Their sole offspring had further complicated the international relationships, and increased her own fortune by marrying a wealthy Greek of Athens, who became in time the father of Louis. Thus wealth, and too much of it, had come to the young man from both parents—for although the Huguenot grandfather’s fine house in Smyrna was twice pillaged and partially burnt by Grecophobe Turks, his monies did not perish in the flames. The demi-god in plus-

fours, as Patricia labelled him, was far too rich for his own well-being. Wealth is not a stimulus.

Tricoupis spent some considerable time unravelling the web of his ancestry to Patricia—trying to make her grasp the extraordinarily varying elements that were mixed up in him. She listened in puzzled silence and then said :

“ How very perplexing ! What do you feel yourself to be ? English—French—Greek—Austrian—or Italian ? ” . . . Through his Greek mother he had had an Italian grandmother, it seemed.

She really was curious to know which of the nationalities predominated. He had spoken to her like an Englishman, with the correct Oxford accent acquired, she learned, during his course there for the B.A. degree.

He answered her with an amused smile.

“ Oh, any one of them that the situation demands. With you, for instance, I feel like an Englishman.”

“ Why ? . . . Please don’t say, if you’d rather not.”

“ But I rather would ! . . . Because, of course, you like Englishmen best—and I like everything that is beautiful to like me ! ”

Patricia brushed aside his impersonal personality. It was one of his qualities that he could say astoundingly personal things so impersonally that it was impossible to resent them as liberties.

“ I know Englishmen best,” she said quietly. “ You are the first Greek I have ever met—if I may call you one ! And I only know what it’s like to feel English. I have no other blood in me.”

“ But why on earth feel anything in particular about your nationality ? ” he objected. “ What does it really matter ? It seems to me a fetish, this nationality complex, a fever which will one day be the death of Christianity ! Nationalism and Christianity—how can they mix ? And isn’t it a terrible menace to your Empire ? . . . Besides which,” he added, looking directly into her face with his queer southern-blue eyes, “ you don’t look so typically English as you say you feel. Your complexion has the clear pallor of Dante’s divine Beatrice.” He pronounced the name in the Italian fashion—*Beatri-tshe*—and it sounded beautiful in Patricia’s ears.

“ Has it ? ” She spoke the words in much the same way as she had said “ Are we ? ” to the Anglo-Arab, because she wasn’t thinking at all about herself or his implied compliment. . . . She was in fact wondering how she could find expression for his own intense pallor—so intense that it did for his eyes and teeth just what the sunburn did for the eyes and teeth of Dau-

bigny—clarified them. . . . Wonderful things, those southern-blue eyes! You could see *through* them, she thought, for sheer clearness. Behind their thick black lashes they were far bluer in their blueness and whiter in their whiteness than any northern-blue eyes she had ever seen. But then, she had never seen such light blue eyes in a face so pale as that of Louis Tricoupi. She had only seen the deeper blue of northern eyes, in faces that were never clearly pale. . . . Perhaps the pink in a northern skin was not a good background for eyes and teeth? . . . It might be that. . . .

They were passing Crete at the moment—which meant that they were well advanced on their journey, and in spite of the real enjoyment she was deriving from the amusing chatter of this brilliant young Cypriot, this elegant citizen of the world with a temporary home in every capital of Europe, she was annoyed, beneath it all, by the thought that he was keeping the Anglo-Arab from drifting into her company. . . . Most certainly, she assured herself, he would so have drifted, had he not taken it for granted that she preferred the society of so extraordinarily attractive a young man. . . . So stupid! . . . She would have enjoyed herself so much more thoroughly, had it not been for the irritating prick of this thought, swinging out from the background of her mind to painful prominence, every time the sunburnt face passed her and smiled, as much as to say: “I won’t interrupt you. Youth prefers youth. I’m not going to be a kill-joy.”

They were passing Crete, and Crete was therefore the topic of the moment. Patricia was trying to feel classical about it—it was a simple matter to feel enchanted with its beauty as it appeared, exquisitely mirrored in a sleeping sea. . . . She had never seen such lassitude on any sea; the languor of the south enveloped the ship. . . . It was all part of a lovely dream! Snow-covered mountains, white as the clouds piled Michael Angelo-wise above their summits, rose from the centre of the island, sun-bathed and glittering, the two crests reflected in the sea.

“Does this make you feel very Greek?” she asked her companion, pointing to the mirage-like scene in the water.

He laughed. “Not specially. Lately I haven’t felt very proud of the Greek blood in my veins.”

“Haven’t you? Why’s that?”

“My father’s home is in Smyrna,” he said. “He is a Greek.” . . . As if that explained all.

Patricia held her tongue. She was good at hiding her ignorance when she wanted to.

" . . . But—yes—this sort of thing does make me forget—feel pleased. It reminds me of the debt the world owes and always will owe to the glory that was Greece."

All along Patricia had known that his nature was more in sympathy with "the glory that was Greece" than with the grim religious endurance of his Huguenot forebears, his Yorkshire granddam. Now, as she watched his changing expression, she could not doubt but that his god was Apollo.

She wished she knew more about Greek Apollo, and about mythology generally. The names of the most familiar deities were about all she knew—and she never, of course, did know when she was calling them by their Greek or Roman names, to Louis's great and open amusement. . . . All the same, something more than the mere beauty of Crete thrilled her now. She liked the feeling that she was looking at a land where the people who had lived and loved had believed in Pan and Neptune and Apollo and all the other Greek gods she had heard of. It gave her the same unreal feeling that she expected to experience in Palestine . . . made far-off historic scenes and events the realities, and everything else just—dreams.

"Isn't it exquisite!" she said. "I like to think that I am actually looking at Crete."

"I wonder what you know about Crete!" The blue eyes were quizzical, exquisite.

"Oh, nothing definite," she admitted. "It's just romantically mixed up with Greek legends and classic names. I paid no attention to Greek mythology at school. If I'd only known that some day I should come here . . . but it was all so dully taught, so idiotically foolish and unimaginable to a northern mind. And now"—she gave one of her ice-melting, bewitching smiles—"it all seems so adorably real—the gods and the people who believed in them, and everything! Crete is like—" She broke off.

"Like what?" asked Tricoupis.

"Like—you, I was going to say," she laughed. The next day they would part; she might allow herself that personal remark. *He* had been personal enough for anything. . . . And it was true, anyway!

"Like me?" He too laughed, and his transparent blue eyes became suddenly dark, solidified, until there was no seeing into their inscrutable depths, no glancing sideways through them. . . . Had they ever been startlingly pale blue and clear? she asked herself.

"Those snow-capped hills, those violet shadows, that laughing light? I've been likened to many things in my day,

but never before to the classic heights of Mount Ida or to a green island floating in the sea."

"But you are like it all, you are a part of it, and you know quite well what I mean. You ought to be playing about on those purple hills, chasing fleeing Daphne—I don't know if the poor thing was ever in Crete! . . . Anyhow, not travelling in a floating hotel and wearing plus-fours."

"If you'll be my Daphne, I'll be your Apollo. I'll make them put us ashore at Candia."

"Thank you! I've no desire to be turned into a laurel-bush—'smelling of honey and the sea,' as Swinburne says. Wasn't that the poor thing's dreary end?"

He saw her brows pucker. She was dragging all she had ever known about mythology and Ida from the depths of her memory. . . . "Ida, 'The Playground of the Gods'!" she mused aloud. That, surely, was what the lesson-book had said?

Tricoupis laughed. "No, no—you're thinking of '*Mother*' Ida—a mountain of still greater classical renown in Asia Minor. That was popularly supposed to be 'the Playground of the Gods'—not this Mount Ida."

Patricia reddened. "Oh?" she said flatly. "Of course I know nothing, really, about either mountain. . . ." How glad she was that the Anglo-Arab was not within earshot! . . . "Only—the name sounded so familiar, with its qualifying adjunct, Mount Ida." She paused. "Mother Ida . . . ?" Her eyes questioned.

"Yes," he said. "'Many-fountained Mother Ida . . . ' Wouldn't you like to visit Crete?"

Her eyes shone. "Rather! I hate leaving it behind. It's just what I have imagined Greece, and the Isles of Greece, would be like. Have you ever stayed there?"

"Certainly. I've had wonderful days there. The excavations at Knossos are amazing. You can see distinct traces of all the different settlements which followed one on top of the other for five thousand years. About half of that period Evans calls the Minoan civilisation, of which we've been hearing so much lately—the latter half. . . . But once you begin on the subject of Crete"—Tricoupis shook his head. "And it all sounds such dry-as-dust stuff, until you see it!" His eyes were dark again.

"You're doing archæological work, then?"

"No." He spoke regretfully.

"Do you ever do anything?"

"I am always doing something."

"What? Just enjoying yourself?"

"Trying to become better fitted for living in the present

by studying the past. I don't require to earn my bread and butter, if that's what you mean, so why should I take it out of the mouth of some other poor devil who has to? It must be hell just to make money enough to keep you alive enough to go on making it!"

Patricia was silent. If he had had to work, she thought, he might eventually have achieved big things—the Anglo-Arab had spoken of his brilliance—but with no need to do anything, he would just fritter away his whole life, enjoying it while he was young and feeling bored with it when he was older.

But Patricia had not got hold of the right idea of him. Louis Tricoupis would be dead long before he was bored. Whom the gods love die young—which means, if you like, either that they never grow old or that the gods only lend to earth a chosen few of their favourites, and snatch them back again before the dreary years of age cast shadows on their youth.

"When you have visited Palestine," the young man said, suddenly, "and lived in the atmosphere of the prophets and apostles with their cult of vengeance and renunciation, perhaps you may find that you want to come to Greece even more urgently than you do now. You may feel eager to exchange Paul for Apollo and even the more human Peter for Pan!"

Patricia smiled at him indulgently. "I'm going to the Cradle of Christianity," she said quietly. "I have no use for your naughty gods!" Then she added, "I know very little about the gods of Greece, but I seem to remember that they *were* naughty. Always making love to someone in the guise of something else. They really were gross deceivers! . . . And I do at least know something more about our Christian Trinity—about Christianity generally."

"Oh, do you?" He laughed his wholly destructive laugh.

"Well, I should do!" Patricia maintained bravely.

"I don't see why. You were probably taught about it still more foolishly than you were taught about the gods of Greece—and at least you seem to have caught something of their joyous spirit. Whereas scarcely anyone seems to have understood anything at all about the ideas and principles of the Founder of what St. Paul at Antioch called 'Christianity.' That queer, oddly shapen little man got most of the ideals of Jesus wrong. His mind seems to me to have got the same twist as his eyes."

"It's *you* who're queer!" Patricia retorted hotly.

"Why queer?" He looked at Crete pensively. "You said I was like Mount Ida—for Crete wouldn't be Crete without Mount Ida . . . do you realise that it's over eight thousand

feet? That's its descriptive height, if you want it put in guide book parlance. . . . So I must be like a snow mountain! Now you say I'm 'queer'! Sublime, you mean!"

"No, I don't. I said queer, and I mean queer. It's your mind I'm talking about. I never said *that* was like Mount Ida—or sublime! Sublime, indeed! Sublimely impertinent, perhaps, to criticise Saint Paul! Pagan!"

Her smile took the edge off her words. Yet, even as she smiled, a cold air seemed to pass over her flesh. . . . Why did this demi-god, too, seem to think that Palestine would disillusion her, that it was going to take and not give?

"No, no, be fair," he laughed. "Impertinent—perhaps—but not pagan! The Greeks were never pagans in your Christian interpretation of the term. They were honest believers in their gods. They consulted them about almost everything they did. Zeus, for instance, was invoked unceasingly. He was worked jolly hard. The early Greeks were tremendously reverent; there wasn't such a thing as disbelief in the power of the gods, and any questioning of them was looked upon as the worst sin—the unpardonable sin. . . . But of course at present your only idea of worship is for the God Who is bound up with the teachings of your own particular Church. An extremely cruel God, I consider. The only God, so far as I know, who 'visits the sins of the fathers' upon helpless little children. I've no use for that sort of God!"

He enjoyed shocking her. Had she never thought for herself that the Jewish God of the Old Testament was horribly cruel, that He was the creation of bigots?

Yes, Patricia had thought upon that subject, and that was why a faint colour had spread over her face. She had often thought about it when she saw dumb animals suffering. Were *they* being punished for the sins of their fathers? She had often been afraid of the fact that it seemed to be only Church that she loved—she scarcely, indeed, knew if she loved her Christ when He was mixed up with God the Father. She liked Him by Himself best—far best, just as her sacrificial Christ.

"I try not to be narrow. I don't think my Church is the only one," she said.

"Then why on earth do you stand up in it and say that you 'believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church'—and in the baptism for the remission of sins? Didn't you tell me you were an Anglo-Catholic? So I suppose that *is* what you say? . . . But for heaven's sake don't let us spoil Crete! Zeus may hear us and throw one of his really awful bombs on the quiet, comfy ship. For I guess it was 'Zeus or be damned to you,' just as it was

with the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Crete spells Zeus, if it spells anything at all."

Patricia was raking together all her tags of information about Zeus, and her quick companion knew it.

"You probably know him better by his Roman name," he said. "Jupiter—he was the top god of all the Roman gods. The Romans never did anything without his approval. His verdict, good or bad, meant much more to them than does to us the verdict of the expert modern mechanic whose duty it is to test a flying-machine before it starts on a journey. But as Zeus of the Greeks he was born on that soaring snow-crowned mountain to which you have likened me. He spent his early days on those slopes—no doubt he was a splendid Alpinist."

His eyes searched the distant height, now lost completely in the clouds, quite as though he expected to see the figure of Zeus emerging from the mist, his hand outstretched like the hand of the Creator in Michael Angelo's conception of the birth of the world.

Patricia felt relieved. Certainly she knew something about Jupiter, and his wife Juno, the "Protector of Women."

"Yes . . . I see it's all coming back to you," Tricoupis said, smiling. "He was 'some god,' wasn't he?"

Patricia laughed. "I do wish they hadn't both Greek and Roman names," she protested. "It's so confusing. And I'm sure it's hard enough to remember one set of names, without such complications. At least, it is for me!"

"Almost impossible, unless you have had a classical education or have lived and travelled in classic lands," he agreed. Then: "When you travel with me to Crete and Asia Minor and Athens," he laughed, "it will all come naturally to you. You will imbibe classic lore with the very air you breathe. Even the children know these immortal stories—all of them."

Louis Tricoupis paused and fixed the girl with his daring pale-blue eyes. When her Dantesque pallor was suffused with a blush it made him think of the wild pink peonies of the Italian woods, and he dared still further. Poor Patricia, her expression refused to harden, as he went on boldly:

"I'll have time then to tell you really lovely stories about Crete. About 'The Golden-haired Girl of Sphakia,' for instance. That tragic Chryse who had her hair bobbed by a knight who fell in love with her when, like Nausicaa, she was washing and bleaching her silken clothes. Don't you think we might use the theme for a musical comedy, you and I? But we won't let the poor young thing die of grief, or her bridegroom become a hermit!"

For your English audience must go home happy. But think how they would enjoy the sight of the love-impassioned knight cutting off the modest Chryse's golden pig-tails! . . . Of course, the 'Golden-haired Girl of Sphakia' is a far cry from Zeus. Her story was history repeating itself ages and ages later. She wasn't the first woman in Greek history whose beauty proved fatal to peace. There was Chryseis, of the *Iliad*, and immortal Helen—"

"You mean—Helen of Troy?" Patricia said simply.

"Yes—and oh! the Helens of this world—what haven't they done. . . . And never a vote between them at all!"

He had moved a little closer to Patricia. "When will you come with me to Crete?" he said. "When are you going to begin to live, to be your real self, live gloriously fully?"

Again that blush swept over Patricia's pale cheeks. She moved uneasily away from his close presence.

"Oh, don't be absurd," she said, laughing to hide her embarrassment. "You needn't talk about living—you just enjoy yourself."

"And isn't that the very essence of living? Isn't that how the gods would have had us live? 'Enjoy God for ever.' And men did enjoy themselves, until Socrates, with his serious mind, came along and formulated a 'logic of the conscience.' I think he must have had some strain of joy-killing Northern blood in his veins, don't you?"

Patricia didn't know—and didn't much care. What she did know, and did mind, was that she was allowing herself to be in a manner hypnotised by her companion's compelling eyes, by his ever-increasing physical attractiveness, whose appeal to her senses was robbing her of her common sense. She could not blind herself to the fact that he was dangerous company, simply because he was so daring and so attractive. She belonged to the type of women to whom beauty in any form makes a dangerous appeal.

If she could have exchanged his society for that of the Anglo-Arab she would have done so gladly, but as that was impossible, she could not resist the pleasure of being with anything so amusing and beautiful as Louis Tricoupi. And, apart from his looks, he was something new to her. The man was a study, so utterly fearless in what he said, so exquisite in the way he said it—for he could say fearless, daring, even outrageous things, in a way which was somehow a part of his physical perfection, his impersonal individuality. He was as elusive as the lights in an opal. And all the time she knew he was as soulless as a lizard, that the only thing he allowed himself to take seriously was a

cult of living so as to get, as he expressed it, "as much enjoyment out of God as he could." He didn't even profess to have a bowing acquaintance with the dour, cruel "God of the Prophets," as he called the Deity whom Patricia did not love, but whom she believed to be the Father of her Christ.

Even to the last hour the man she most wanted to be with managed tactfully to avoid her, making more and more clear his impression that she was thoroughly enjoying a harmless, transient flirtation with the handsome, wealthy Cypriot boy. True, she had played a game of dummy-bridge with them both—an amusing game, from many points of view; and besides this, had spoken now and then to the Anglo-Arab when occasion demanded: but their first talk had been the longest, and the only interesting one between them. . . . Yet, somehow, in spite of all this, the little oddments of chat with Patricia which Dau-bigny had been unable, in courtesy, to avoid had carried them both a very far distance. If the boat was tearing through the dreamily still seas, life was tearing, also, along its destined way, with Patricia, and the man who didn't wish to spoil sport, in its wake.

And the rest of the journey passed with more significance to Patricia than she was at the time aware of. In the short duration of that voyage she was transplanted from Europe to Africa—arriving at Alexandria—and very soon she would be hurried away from the now familiar surroundings of the ship and its "ghastly crowd" of passengers—ghastly no longer because of the outstanding units whom she had got to know and like. The *Helouan* had travelled fast and far, but no faster nor farther than her own consciousness.

When she was saying good-bye to the Cypriot he rejected the word, would have none of it.

"Nonsense!" he said, "this isn't our final parting. A lot has got to happen between us before that comes to pass. The Fates that were so kind as to allow us to meet won't be so unkind as to part us for ever now. Why shouldn't we meet, if we want to, if we find pleasure in being together?"

Patricia didn't answer, and Tricoupis went on, insistently:

"You do wish for many more meetings, don't you?"

"Of course. Oh yes." She tried to speak casually.

"You're coming to Crete"—he spoke positively; "I'll pick you up in Palestine. When you're weary of the Apostles you——"

"Oh, don't!"—her delicious smile urged him—"don't be so absolutely ridiculous!"

"Why ridiculous? You told me you were a free-lance."

The meaning in his blue eyes was filling Patricia's veins with the surging race of the passionate blood of youth.

"Good-bye," she said again, abruptly. "And—you are quite mistaken!"

"What about?" he asked, lifting his brows in a puzzled way.

"About me."

"Oh no, it's you that are mistaken about yourself!" he answered, laughing. "You don't know yourself, your real self, the self that would love to do lovely things in a lovely way." He raised her hand to his lips. "Addio, for the present. . . . I wish I had got you before you got God!"

"Oh! . . ." She dragged her hand away. "You're awful!"

"Your dreary God," he insisted. "He's not your real deity. Your real God is the one who wants you to love Him and love the lovely world He made for man's pleasure. Your idea of God is—insulting."

"Good-bye for ever!" Patricia cried wrathfully. "And please stay with your companions on Olympus! I don't think you're quite suited to my common or garden work-a-day world. I don't want you!"

"Don't you?" he laughed daringly. "And what right have you, or anyone else, to make the world 'common or garden'?"

But Patricia was already well down the stairs of the gangway, and he found himself addressing his porter instead.

The girl was more than sorry to leave the ship, but, as expressed in her last words and in her abrupt departure, relieved also. How much longer would her senses have resisted the assault of the demi-god's personality? And, on the other hand, how much longer could she have endured the annoyance that had been gathering in the other part of herself? The self which knew that, for all his brilliance and all his charm, what she had felt for the Greek Cypriot had nothing whatever to do with the feeling she could have had for the man who had said good-bye to her in two little minutes—without protest or parley. *He* hadn't hinted that it would be pleasant to meet her again, not he! He had at that moment distanced her immeasurably, had treated her as though she were a foolish girl in love with a pretty boy whom no woman would take seriously.

CHAPTER VII

PATRICIA had been three weeks in Palestine. Only twenty-one days, and yet sufficiently long to have almost obliterated her preconceived vision of the Holy City.

But oh ! that first morning with its almost hurtful rapture ! That destructive and constructive morning ! Could she ever, ever recapture its feelings, that almost overwhelming emotion that seized her as she passed under the high arch of the Jaffa Gate and said to herself : " I am in Jerusalem ! I, Patricia Paget, am actually in Jerusalem ! "

Her preconceived vision had faded almost in that moment of rapture—the reality was all so different. To begin with, when she first saw Jerusalem, as she drove up to it from the level of the distant station, it did not appear to be in the least " a city set on a hill," any more than Rome appears to be set on seven hills. Patricia had seen hill cities in Italy that really merited the appellation, cities that were truly " celestial," so high up were they perched, and so intimate with the clouds and the blue sky. But Jerusalem makes no such impression on the newly-arrived traveller, and she did not, of course, know at the time that the tableland of Judæ is so high as to dwarf the good three thousand feet of its mountain peaks to the appearance of so many hundreds. Nor had she ever visualised the Holy City as a mediæval town, surrounded by crenelated walls and battlements, with Saladin's fortress overlooking it, as she saw it then, bathed in the sunshine of an early spring morning. She had heard more about the walls of Jericho than about those of Jerusalem ; and yet to-day it is the walls and the gates of Jerusalem that are its most distinctive feature. Indeed, her ideas of the earthly Jerusalem were sadly mixed up with hymn-book, and even Scriptural, descriptions of the heavenly. She had visualised it as a sort of glitteringly golden city set on a hill, too unreal to require fortresses for soldiers and walls with loopholes for shooting at enemies.

Already, after three weeks, in her imagination the Drama of the Crucifixion had given place in the city itself to the Drama of the Crusades. Saladin, not the Prince of Peace, figured on the stage ; John the Baptist had been replaced by Richard Cœur de Lion.

The hill-top city in a peaceful, Arcadian Judea, where was it? And where was its "green hill far away"? What was this city of sunlit walls, and dark streets full of busy merchants and peasants? Who were these beautiful women, unveiled and unashamed, who wore their richly-embroidered dresses as naturally as though they were common, work-a-day clothes? Who were these strange men, with haunted eyes, and oiled ringlets framing their pale faces like whiskers? For whom were they looking, with that abstracted gaze? Whom did they expect? She had never imagined such faces of sorrow, or dreamt of such kingly bearing, as the poor Arabs unloading their kneeling, grunting camels. How ill-bred they must think the rest of the world, these dukes in beggars' clothing!

From her high window in the Franciscan Hospice where, thanks to Francis Daubigny, she had found convenient, if austere, quarters, Patricia could look right over the roofs of the city and gaze at the Mount of Olives. "The Mountain," as it is called locally, faced her. She must see it whenever she looked out of her window—and the window filled the whole end of her narrow room, that room which had become her home, the new Patricia's home, which housed her new and unrecognisable self. Would she ever recapture anything of her former self—of the girl who had come to Palestine to have her faith confirmed, who had made the great adventure to find out something more about herself than she had been able to discover in her conventional life in London?

The room was her home, and the window was her watch-tower. It seemed to Patricia as though from time immemorial she had been listening to all Jerusalem passing beneath it—a Jerusalem that began before sunrise and never ended until a late moon was lending a clear, pale light to Zion. For how long had she thought and wondered and questioned, while her eyes looked out unseeingly over the golden-tinted domes of the sun-scorched native houses that filled the foreground of her immortal view?

Always before the sun rose in the morning she could hear, from her narrow bed, the feet of the devout going to Mass. She had learned already the intense human hatred which seethed in the street below when Catholic-Greek, Orthodox-Greek, Armenian and Latin Catholics hurried down it to worship in their various ways the Divine Son of Man Whose whole message to humanity is summed up in three simple words, "Love one another." She had discovered that it was hate, not love, that haunted the streets of Jerusalem.

Later in the morning, when the devout were all at Mass, she would listen with a happier heart to the quick patter, patter of the

mules over the cobble-stones. The dear black beasts were bringing the milk for her coffee, and fresh green food for the Hospice.

Still later, and sadly often, she would hear the solemn chanting of funeral processions, some of them strange processions of strange peoples who lived, and who buried their dead, in strange ways.

Patricia loved her high window; it was her sanctuary. She felt safe up there, safe from so many destructive things. When she went out she so often encountered terrible sights. Yesterday, for instance, a poor tired country Jewess shaken like a rabbit-skin by an infuriated Moslem, because she had innocently rested a moment on a seat outside the gate of the most holy mosque in the city—the beautiful Kubbet-es-Sakhra (Dome of the Rock). And on Friday, the devout of the Latin Communion being stoned and insulted, just as their Lord had been insulted while visiting the Stations of the Cross which mark the road along which the Saviour passed to His Crucifixion. Buffeted and insulted, mark you, not by unbelievers, but by fellow-Christians.

At the Greek Easter, too, she had seen police on duty to keep order and prevent outrages amongst rival Christians in the church where their Saviour's Death, Burial, and Resurrection are commemorated under one roof, in different chapels, according to the various rites and ceremonies of the different Christian sects in Jerusalem. A dangerous custom that, and one which has ever caused unceasing anxiety to the authorities of the city.

Patricia's window saved her from these distressing scenes, and yet allowed her to see so much of the life of the place. There was always something happening in the street below. If it was nothing more than just a group of Bethlehem women in their picturesquely beautiful clothes returning to the country, or some queer tribe from she didn't know where, it was diverting to watch, and the scene was never without beauty. . . . And as a change from looking straight down, she could always look up and face the mountain—the Mount of Olives.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help . . ."

The words were constantly in her mind. But had help come to her? Wasn't she really afraid to go out and see any more of the Biblical sites, afraid to walk about the amazing streets, in case she should have the last garments of belief torn from her poor soul, leaving it naked and starved? . . .

Hadn't each single day of the whole twenty-one seemed to distance her immeasurably from her old beliefs, her old accepted forms and ceremonies? Hadn't these three weeks, spent

entirely amongst fanatical Christians of almost every variety, pretty well made her hate any kind of sect, and all fixed forms of worship? Wasn't it awful? What would Miss Cresswell say? What would Aunt Harriet have said?

She had come to Jerusalem to find Christ, and she had lost Him! The thought was agony. It made her cry out as though with physical pain. . . .

No! no! She hadn't lost Him! She had changed Him, perhaps. But somehow, even her new Christ was not to be found anywhere in this Oriental, noisy town that yet was Jerusalem. Not anywhere in its wonderful streets full of wonderful peoples who all hated each other so astoundingly. For her He wasn't even on the Mount of Olives which had seen His Agony in the Garden!

Patricia stretched out her hands to the country which lay far beyond the built-over hill.

"He is there," she said, "in Galilee, the real Jesus of the New Testament. The 'Man Christ-Jesus' Whom I've always loved is there!"

She smiled at a sudden thought.

"And what would Aunt Harriet have said if I had told her that the only places in Palestine to-day where I have felt the true influence of His Spirit were the ugly little modern Jewish settlements?"

The girl had visited many of the Zionist communal settlements, and they had been a thrilling and agreeable surprise to her, for she had been prejudiced beforehand by the stories about them which she had heard from both Moslems and anti-Semite Christians in Jerusalem. But when she went among them, what she had been told seemed to her mostly lies. One big lie, certainly, she "pinned to the wall," that of the "sweated Arab labour." Her belief in that *canard* was due, of course, to her ignorance of both Arabs and Jews. The true Arab who will allow himself to be sweated has yet to be discovered. He understands human dignity and the essence of living too well for that. And in the Zionist settlements hired labour is not allowed. But Patricia did not know these things, and so had searched diligently and in vain for a sight of these poor "sweated Arabs" and their idle Jewish employers. This was only one of the many anti-Jewish lies she had found contradicted by actual facts when she visited the queer half-finished garden-cities of Palestine.

The thing which struck her most forcibly—and that she was sure no fair-minded person could help being struck by—was the spirit of Jesus—His ideals and, if one may say so, His politics—being actually put into practical shape by the Christians who

have helped and forwarded the Zionist movement. That Christ's own people should have been outcast and countryless for all these centuries seemed now incredible in this Palestine—the mockery to Christianity too bitter. Patricia could not bear the thought. Hatred of Jews had never been a part of her creed. She argued that the Lord Who had bidden His followers love one another—love even their enemies—could not have wanted centuries of vengeance wreaked by those followers upon the descendants of men who had acted in consummate bigotry, in blind obedience to an order of things they had been taught to uphold.

For the anti-Semites there was, however, another bolt to shoot against the girl's championship of an unpopular cause. Religious questions apart, they said, there was always the fear—the certainty, even—of the notoriously prolific Jews eventually outnumbering and swamping the Arab population. But Patricia had her answer ready, in the form of a question.

The Arab, she asserted, could not fear this racial swamping. Otherwise, why should he always be so keen to sell his land to his Jewish neighbour for as much gold as he could heap on every inch of it, asking outrageous prices for land that he had never troubled to make worth anything?

No—hatred of Jews, intolerance of other people's beliefs, had never been part of Patricia's mental make-up, and it was in the Jewish settlements alone that she seemed to find the peace she craved in this disappointing Palestine. It was there, and in the Galilean villages and hills, that she found it easiest to visualise "Jesus of Nazareth" passing by . . . the Jesus Who wept for Lazarus whom He loved—the Jesus Who was a friend for little children—the Carpenter of Nazareth, Who went about doing good, in a natural, human way, Who loved His home and His simple country life, yet was ready and willing, when the time came, to leave both and "go about His Father's business."

When she was alone in the still evenings on the hills, she felt that she might meet Him at any point, walking in the company of his chosen friends. He fitted so well into the picture. And it was really a new and astounding thought, that reality of His hard, everyday life in the country. And how little the country life had changed since then was a fact too obvious to ignore—it was just that which gave her the feeling that she might see Jesus at any moment, walking with Peter and Andrew, talking to them as man to man, trying so hard to make them understand his new and startling ideas.

And it was there, in the country of Galilee, that His amazing genius most astounded her. She had never really thought about

the originality of His mind before. Having always lived in a country familiar with His teachings, she had overlooked the fact of their daring novelty. In London she had been too much taken up with the supernatural side of the Gospel narrative to think about the natural, but in Palestine she seemed to see the human personality of Jesus more clearly, to grasp the reality of His work as leader of a new and revolutionary school of thought, opposed to the old tradition of the Sanhedrim, to the worldly-wise maxims of the Gentile rulers and philosophers. It was astounding to think that the Genius of the World *par excellence* should have come out of little mud-built Nazareth, that after those great centuries of Greek philosophers and thinkers and teachers, a working carpenter of Galilee should have formulated the highest ethics of religion the world has ever known, and thought thoughts that the world had never thought before. She realised what a worn-out world it was before the coming of His birth. In this new aspect He was so much greater—too great and too big for her. That was where the pain came in. Her Divine Christ had been somehow nearer and dearer than this wonderful Teacher and Leader of her new conception.

Standing by her open window Patricia stared nervously out at the Mount of Olives. Palestine had taken so much from her, torn so much of the romance and mystery from her religion. It had left it too far from her. Its emotional appeal had given place to a cold douche of realities and common sense. It had placed her "Gentle Jesus" with the leaders of the world, the greatest of them, but also one of them. It had taken away her Lord, and she "knew not where they had laid Him." Yes, it had done all that, and as yet it had given her but little knowledge or understanding of the true helpfulness of the Great Master of Love.

She turned impatiently, and walked nervously up and down the room, then came back to the window. Looking out, she spoke her troubled thoughts aloud with a passionate gesture to the City of the Immortal Drama.

"Instead of helping me to find a still keener pleasure in my Church, and increasing my faith in the supernatural teachings of Christianity, you have put wood into the bread of my religion—you have given me a stone of offence and a stumbling-block! Nothing, anyway, that will help my loneliness, nothing that I can get hold of! What good is a 'Master' to me, one who expects us to find the kingdom of God within ourselves? I want something or someone outside myself, someone far above my wretched self, upon whom I can rely. A master and a philosopher, even if he is the most perfect man the world has

ever known, won't give me back the lover of my soul. How can I feel 'Safe in the arms of Jesus' when He has said that my weak strength, not the Everlasting Arms, is to uphold me? "

She let her eyes linger on the slopes of Zion.

"Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our Lord . . ."

What glorious things it did speak to her! Glorious beauty, glorious colour, glorious movement—all the glories of the Orient; but not glorious as a city of her Lord. A city, rather, that would have made Jesus weep again, as once of old, beholding it as a very hotbed of bitter disunion and uncharitableness.

A passionate wave of unbelief in everything that she had held most sacred surged suddenly over Patricia's soul, drowned her in a conviction that it was all a make-believe, a sham, that Christianity, as she knew it, was an invention pure and simple, an invention to induce the initial acceptance of a newer, purer political and social creed.

"And I know what's done it!" she cried aloud, sinking on to a chair and cupping her mournful face in her hands. "It's my daily increasing sense of the superstition of the country—the knowledge that these people who are the same yesterday and to-day and forever—whose unchangingness you just can't help feeling—believe in pagan superstitions more fundamentally than they believe in any faith they may outwardly profess. It's been borne in on me that it was just that knowledge of the psychology of those around them, and the being so full of superstition themselves, that made the Apostles and the admirers of Jesus elaborate and embroider the story of His life and death so as to make it catch on with a people who drink in superstition with their mother's milk. Look at the Mohammedans—they declare five times each day that they worship only one God, but they live in terror of a thousand superstitions. They are even more superstitious than the Christians who worship three Gods in one—a blasphemy to the Moslem. In this country Jews, Christians and Mohammedans are all one in their fear of the evil powers, in their belief of good and bad omens—and it's just that which makes me feel certain that if the cult of Christianity was not to die a natural death when its Originator was removed, the disciples and the later leaders of the movement all saw that they had to pander to the mentality of the people they were dealing with. They just had to make Christ's life and death and work fit in with the utterances of the venerated Jewish Prophets! Had to attach to it the supernatural. . . . And that's that—and I'm . . . miserable!"

Patricia's eyes fell upon a photograph of Peter, his parting present to her in a soft leather double frame. She gave a relieved sigh as she picked it up and looked into the straightforward, sincere eyes.

"Well," she said, "we shall understand each other better now, that's one good thing, and you'll soon be here."

A glow of reassurance came to her. She had thought little enough about Peter since she had been in Palestine, for psychologically it had engrossed and thrilled her . . . but now, when her belief had gone from her, when she was faced with the nakedness of her own soul, her hungry senses turned to the man who loved her. Yes, Peter was still hers for the taking. If she had lost the Lover of her Soul—and she now knew she had never really possessed Him, had merely persuaded herself into thinking so—she still had a human lover. Peter must comfort her human self.

"And you will, Peter, won't you? You will comfort and satisfy all my idiotic, unstable wants?"

Patricia held the soft leather frame in her two hands, and gazed into the eyes of the photograph. But it was not Peter's face or Peter's eyes that gazed into hers. It was the face and the eyes of the sunburnt Francis Daubigny. It was his lips, not Peter's, that she felt on hers—his arms holding her. It was his love that she knew would satisfy her. Oh, Patricia!

She closed the frame, slapped the two portions of it together. Peter had expected her to put her own photograph into the still empty half—poor Peter!

Patricia closed it with an emphatic slap and put it inside the drawer of her table. She wasn't going to have the Anglo-Arab's dark eyes piercing into her struggling soul, seeing the "disillusionment" he had foretold for her. His spirit could jolly well leave her alone if his material being had no need of her!

CHAPTER VIII

BUT had it not? How little she knew of his weakness or, to express it more truly, of a woman's power over the man she wants.

Mind affects mind, Patricia, even more powerfully, because more insidiously, than body affects body; and surely you should

have known this after having lived three weeks in Palestine ! For is there any other country in the world, or any place in any of those countries, so dominated by a master mind as is Palestine ? The mind of Jesus corrects and adjusts and enlightens the minds of its wayfarers from hilltop to valley and from its valleys to the low seas. No civilised being who has studied the genius of that mind can get away from it in Palestine. The invisible presence of Jesus haunts the narrow land He knew so well from horizon to horizon. The biggest names in history pale before His. Even on the very sites of their victories or their tragic defeats, their ghosts to-day do not affect the minds of men as does the mind of the despised Nazarene Who first loved mankind.

But Patricia, although she was quite well aware that between Francis Daubigny and herself there was a strong magnetic attraction, had not the vaguest idea that her "Dantesque pallor" and her bewitching smile floated before his eyes incredibly oftener than his sunburnt face thrust itself upon the film of her subconscious mind. She had not the slightest notion as yet how cussed and perverse love can be, how unwantedly it takes possession of us, how blind it is to all hints that its presence is not only inconvenient but wrong. "And how can it be wrong," she would argue, "when there is no human method yet discovered by which this disturbing visitor can be dislodged ? If the only cure for love is heartbreak, as some poet declares, who will be the discoverer of its prevention, of an effectual method of keeping the cat-burglar, Cupid, from the citadel of the human heart ?"

Francis Daubigny did not want to fall in love with Patricia, or with any other girl, and it was despicable, he told himself, that she should so engross his thoughts and force her way into his senses. He cursed her and banished her, and back she came again, tempting him with that destructive smile of hers, and appealing to him with those haunting eyes of hers, those very lovely, longing-to-be-loved eyes ! And the tiger-cat in her ! Those sharp, ready claws of hers ! That latent intelligence, too, waiting for its development when her youth's hunger should be appeased. Oh, the fine womanhood in that passionate pallor of her cold face, and in that queer, husky voice of hers, a voice which held the tragedy and the comedy of Nature's lavish dowry.

He had tried to keep away from her when his work took him to Galilee and to Nazareth. He vowed to himself that he would not go near Jerusalem. Then he modified that vow and said that he would go to Jerusalem and discover, of course without going near the Hospice, whether she had found rooms in the Casa Nova or not. It was the right thing to do, and it would test his

strength of will. It would prove to him that he was a fool—but not a damn-fool.

And so he went to Jerusalem, and as he had gone there, why not do the most direct thing—call at the Hospice and ask the doorkeeper if Miss Paget was staying there? Only that—not ask for her, of course.

Thus he argued and thus he did, and again “the woman tempted” and the man fell, for when he called, Patricia was coming out of the building at the very moment when he was questioning the porter about her.

The man called to Patricia.

“That is the young lady, sir,” he said, and Francis Daubigny was forced to wait and speak to her.

And it was so indescribably pleasant to see her again that he responded eagerly to Patricia’s invitation to have lunch with her and take her to see something she had not yet discovered for herself in Jerusalem.

They lunched in the long salon of the Hospice, crowded with Spanish pilgrims from Mexico, and afterwards they did the small Crusaders’ Church together, an affectingly perfect reminder of one of the most questionable periods of the history of Christianity.

Francis Daubigny had known the little Norman building well when it was a Turkish Café. “No doubt,” he said to Patricia, “it owes its unimpaired condition to that fact.” And he painted it for her in its Turkish day, when it was full, not of Crusaders but of turbaned Moslems and bubbling narghile, a feast of colour and of Oriental dignity. Now that it was once more in Christian hands, Mass was again celebrated on its old stone altar, and it was, he told her, one of the many religious sites visited by Anglo-Catholic pilgrims. . . . Miss Cresswell, thought Patricia, had probably also attended Mass there.

Once begun, the days of sightseeing together continued while Daubigny remained in Jerusalem. He wanted Patricia to visit with him the church of the Holy Sepulchre, to see the tomb of one of his Crusader ancestors which lies just in front of the main entrance to the building.

Patricia loved doing things with him, she said, because he was so familiar with Arabic that he understood all that the people around them were saying, very often greatly to their surprise when he let them know it, for Anglo-Arab though he still looked in Patricia’s eyes, his clothes and his gait gave him away to others. No Oriental could have mistaken him for one of themselves.

To reach the tomb of the Crusader Daubigny they had to go down the short, wide flight of steps which took them on to the paved open space in front of the church where the tomb was

discovered. On this particular day, both the wide flight of steps and the sunny open space were thronged with a motley picturesque jumble of people, mostly Russians, as it was the Orthodox Greek Holy Week.

Francis Daubigny had to make a passage through them for Patricia and himself. Very gently, and with the exquisite courtesy born of his long intimacy with the East, where a man may be a blackguard but may not be mannerless, he made his way through the excited people. When one youth refused to get up from his position with hundreds of others seated on the marble steps, Daubigny tapped him on the shoulder with his cane and spoke some words, the effect of which was to make the youth leap to his feet, and make way hurriedly. As Daubigny smiled and passed on with her, Patricia had pleaded for an explanation.

"Do tell me what you said. I feel so jealous of you! I long to understand their Biblical language, to know what they feel about it all."

"The worst of it is," he answered, "when you have lived here as long as I have, you begin to think in their Biblical language—even in English your thoughts get that twist of expression."

"Really? But—well, what did you say?" she urged.

He laughed.

"I merely said—'Thinkest thou that thou art the Son of Heaven that thou obstructest my path and causest me to walk round thee?' You must remember that youth knows quite well who I am, that I am here as an English official employed by the Powers that Be, and must be treated with due respect."

"Oh, I see. That explains it," said Patricia. She now knew vaguely that his official position had to do with the great and much-talked-of Ruthenberg scheme for the supply of light, power and irrigation to Palestine. She had heard him discussing the subject with Louis Tricoupi on the ship, and it was after one of these discussions that Francis Daubigny had spoken to her about the unmistakable ability of the god-like Greek—his grasp and understanding of subjects about which there seemed no earthly reason for his knowing anything; his general ability.

"... But look here—" he said, almost in the same breath, "do you see that good-looking woman over there with that fringe of silver coins round her face?" He pointed to her. "They are fastened in below her head-dress."

"Yes, I see them," Patricia said enquiringly.

"Well, it was a coin like one of those that Jesus was speaking of in the parable of the woman who swept out her house to recover a lost silver coin."

"And of course she did," said Patricia, "and no wonder she

was glad when she found it ! It meant much more than just a little silver money, it was part of her exquisite head-dress."

... But now these halcyon days of sightseeing were over. Francis Daubigny had left Jerusalem two weeks ago, with just a curt little note of farewell, saying that business had called him away.

It probably had, but all the same Patricia sensed that he had run away from her. She was sure of it. He was doubtless afraid that the splendid strain he had put upon himself to keep their friendship on a platonic footing would not last much longer. He had so determinedly avoided personalities of all sorts that she really knew as little about his life and his people as she had done when she left the *Helouan*. For her part, she had, of course, told him nothing about herself—how could she ? If he showed so plainly his intention to avoid the personal note in their conversation, how could she do otherwise ? How say, for instance : " I am very nearly engaged to a man called Peter Armitage, whom I don't really love but who loves me awfully much and wants to marry me. I'm so lonely, and so desperately in need of love that I shall probably accept him " ? Or how tell him : " It's you I really want, not Peter at all, but as you won't let yourself love me, I must just be contented with Peter who does " ?

How could she say all that to him ? And yet that would be the only truth about herself, and about Peter, that she could tell him. She wanted him because she had wanted love all her life and had got the meanest mockery of it. Because of her want of love she had sought the Church and tried to find satisfaction there—and now Jerusalem, with its holy hates and its bewilderment of church ceremonials, and its contradiction, as it seemed to her, of the original teachings of Jesus, had robbed her of her church, her sanctuary from a loveless life. . . .

Such conscious thoughts and subconscious workings of the mind during the space of ten minutes, remember, would fill volumes of written words. Patricia had not spent as much as one hour in her room, and less than that on day-dreams, when there was a knock at the door.

" Yes ? Come in ! " Patricia smiled. She had been so far away . . . with her Aunt Harriet, in church, in London, with all the throbbing, busy world of London outside it. She had always felt that, always been conscious, when in church, of the fact that she lived in London and yet not in it, that her life in the great capital of Empire was far duller than that of many a girl in a small country town. . . . She had been kneeling with her aunt in the dimly-lit church, trying to block out the consciousness

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of the fact that she wanted to be in the very thick of the throbbing life of London . . . there it was, going on outside, rolling along, never stopping, never caring, just so long as it got the last kick out of life—and here she was, kneeling with her bloodless “unlived” aunt in the dimly-lit church, always trying to find satisfaction in creeping to the Cross, or in following diligently all the Anglo-Catholic innovations in the Protestant Church of England, trying to make a substitute for a human lover out of Christ !

The knock on the door had brought her back to Jerusalem, to her high-windowed room in the Casa Nova—and her “Yes? Come in!” brought in Nazaraina, the converted Moslem and native of Nazareth, who had been caught by the French mission school. A creature with a small body and big frightened eyes, her pale emotional face always brightened when Patricia spoke to her, for Patricia “had grace,” to use the Arabic biblical expression.

“Yes, Nazaraina?” Patricia said again.

“Please, Sitt, a gentleman is down in the salon; he is asking to see you.”

Patricia’s heart fluttered abominably, it made her feel quite breathless. . . . Had he come back? . . . Was it Francis Daubigny, or was it . . . oh!—could it be Peter? He might, of course, come any day now.

“Did he not give you his card, or tell you his name?”

“No.” Nazaraina shook her head. “I think he wished to surprise the Sitt.”

Her tired eyes smiled sympathetically. She looked old, but she was still young, according to English standards.

“How tired you are, Nazaraina,” Patricia exclaimed. “Are you ill?”

“No, no, Sitt! I had no sleep last night, my mother was worse—and all yesterday I was beating the carpets on the roof.”

“Poor soul! What can I do for you?”

“Nothing, thank you, Sitt. You are always kind and generous. Nazaraina is grateful.”

Patricia brushed her short hair and powdered her pretty face, from habit, not necessity.

“Your life is hard,” she said to the still waiting maid. “And you are so fragile! My hands look quite big beside yours.”

“It is not too hard, Sitt. The good God wills it.”

Patricia smiled. This was the Moslem’s invariable answer—“Allah wills it!” How often already she had heard it, with the added words from the Koran, “Allah puts no burden round a man’s neck too heavy for him to bear.”

This poor, pale “child-of-grace-through-baptism” was still a devout Moslem at heart. She had the Moslem’s unshakable

belief that every man's fate is about his own neck, while at the same time she lived in hourly dread of malign spirits whose power seemed to her more 'terrible than the power of Allah, robbed Him of his oneness. Civilisation upon civilisation—and how many there were when you come to think of it, before the green banner of Islam swept over Palestine and gathered to its crescent the peoples of every condition of holy hate and racial rivalry—had been at work on Nazaraina. That wonderful green banner had caught and held her forebears from its earliest days. She had always lived in Christian Nazareth as a child, but her people were Moslems, and what chance had her "baptism for the remission of sins" under the circumstances?

The Italian mission school had caught her and taught her to read and write, and to speak French; and then, to save her from the fanaticism of her family, it had given her daily employment, but its teachings were sown upon a ground so encrusted with the fatalism of Islam, together with the indigenous nature-worship which has grown up round the teachings of the prophet and makes of them a religion more "understood of the people," that their product was a queer kind of Catholicism. The powers of magic for good or for evil, the thousand and one tokens of good or bad luck, the malignity of the evil genii which her primitive progenitors had propitiated, still ruled Nazaraina's days, because in her going out and in her coming in she encountered them at every turn.

As this pathetic figure of ignorance, overlaid with this veneer of religions, watched the slim English girl hurry away along the straight corridor with, on one side of it, the doors of all the straight narrow rooms of the pilgrims, and on the other the Stations of the Cross in gaily-coloured pictures, she shook her head sadly.

So beautiful and so generous—and only a poor heretic! Nazaraina, who was worn and plain and always tired, and who had a cross, bedridden mother to support, was better off than the Sitt—far better off—because she was, as a child of grace, under the protection of her Blessed Lady. It was the rich Sitt who was to be pitied, because she did not understand that all Nazaraina's trials and poverty were really fine chaplets of pearls, jewels bestowed upon her as a privilege, precious tokens that she, humble little Nazaraina, might bear suffering, as her Lord had borne it for sinful humanity.

Nazaraina quite forgot—really was oblivious to the fact—that she had been unable to throw off her fear when, that very morning, she had discovered that her charm against the evil eye was lost. Something dreadful would happen to her, she was sure, now that she had lost her precious Mey'eh-Mubarkah, that

mixture of many ingredients which is the Moslem woman's favourite charm against the evil eye. It is sold only during the first ten days of the month of Moharram, and Nazaraina would have to wait many months before she could get another little portion of the precious mixture. And so her weary expression and her tired body were the result of fear, not of her sleepless night or of beating from the Hospice carpets the dust off the feet of the pilgrims—feet which were not beautiful as the feet of those who brought glad tidings to Zion.

Nazaraina walked slowly along the corridor, silently repeating the proper prayers as she passed each Station, until she met the Mother Superior, a fine, deep-bosomed, motherly woman—an Italian, of course.

"How did your mother pass the night, Nazaraina?" she asked with a kindly smile. In her heart the good woman disliked Nazaraina's maternal relative, who was a detestable old fanatic and treated her Christian daughter like a dog—and no dog finds a home with a devout Moslem.

"In much pain, Mother," the girl replied, and the Superior looked her sympathy. She had a soft spot in her heart for the gentle creature, and with an indulgent smile she laid her hand tenderly on her shoulder.

"Poverina!" she murmured.

"The Blessed Virgin helps me to bear it," said Nazaraina gratefully.

"That's right, my child. . . . See to it that all the carpets on the north side are beaten to-day."

She passed on her way, and only for a few moments was her busy mind occupied with Nazaraina's hard life.

. . . Of course there was the mother's point of view to be considered, and, being Italian and human, Mother St. Clare considered it. . . . She was bedridden, and forced to eat her bread from the hand of her "infidel" daughter—"a dirty Christian," be she ten times her daughter. But . . .

The Mother Superior shrugged her shoulders. Being Italian, she too had in her veins an affinity with the East, and "No man is given a burden heavier than he can bear!" Insh'allah—perhaps Allah willed that the old woman should eat the eggs and drink the milk which her daughter brought to her from the house of the "unclean infidels"!

CHAPTER IX

IF Peter had received Patricia's letter telling him that she was coming to Palestine and hoped to meet him there, at the end of his visit to Cairo instead of at the beginning, it might have been easier for him to divide his attentions between his extremely kind uncle and the monuments of Upper Egypt, and the country generally, but it is doubtful if he would have enjoyed them as much. For it set his mind at rest. It assured him that she loved him. He read between her very cryptic lines the fact that if he had not been going to Palestine she would not have gone there. He told himself that Pat had determined to come for two reasons : to prove what Palestine could do for her, spiritually, and to prove her true feelings for himself ; that she had judged, rightly, that in Palestine better than in any other place they could find out if they had any true fellowship of mind, any "spiritual affinity."

Now the Peter of three weeks ago, the Peter who had said good-bye to Patricia in London, could not have questioned the existence of that affinity, the truth of that fellowship ; and of his own feelings for her he still had no doubt, but Egypt had made him think. He had enjoyed Egypt tremendously, though it had been at first with a somewhat distracted mind—and how could it be otherwise ? The amazing suggestions which Egypt must and does call up in all intelligent visitors, his obvious duty towards his generous but not very interesting host, and his thoughts about Patricia formed a triangle of thought by no means simple and sufficiently absorbing. At first he found it almost impossible to throw his mind into the dead past—which at the end of his three weeks he discovered was very much alive in the Egypt of to-day—while the very living present which whirled round his love for Patricia was so exacting. When he received her letter he could scarcely tolerate the idea of having to wait until his uncle's prearranged programme for "doing" Egypt had expired before he could go to her as her accepted lover. And such he now looked upon himself to be, for Pat was not the sort of girl to trifle with a man and arouse expectations which she had no intention of fulfilling.

How like her it was to ask for time to find out her true feelings

for him and then come away in a hurry after him, to plunge into things, to make up her mind in five minutes, so to speak, about a thing which was to last until death did them part. It was certainly rather devastating to any intelligent sight-seeing on his part. Yet it proved not wholly so, because his love for Patricia, beautiful as it was, just lacked that something which Patricia missed in it, a something which he could not give her because he was too young for his years, oddly lacking in worldly experience. His was the sort of love which makes a strong physical appeal to women who are no longer young, on account of its freshness and its rare, untarnished ideals. In Egypt the image of Patricia and her acknowledged love for him went about with him like a burning lamp, his flame of grateful happiness ; it was the truly delightful thing, the warm, human thing, in these days when Egypt with all her sorcery and all her mystery was gradually laying her cold hands on his warm flesh. But Egypt was stronger than Patricia, stronger than his own will ; she was subtly shaping and changing him, working wonders in so short a time. Egypt was making it extremely hard for him to be the bright and light-hearted companion his uncle expected him to be. And not only did Egypt make him feel that he was costing his uncle a great deal and giving him very little, but by the end of his time up the Nile she often completely stole him from Patricia and put out her lamp of love. He was often taken from himself, made a stranger to the old Peter ; and above all things Egypt had made him feel, as Pat would have expressed it, "like a worm." Yet a worm that could think, think both destructively and constructively—and Peter had been little accustomed to thinking ; he had been before everything a man of action.

There was one thought from which he could not get away, which was more tenacious than even the thought of Patricia's love, and that was the progressive evolution of man's spiritual beliefs, the gradual development of man's spiritual being. This idea was forced upon him in Egypt because there he could follow its growth pretty well from the beginning of all super-thought, and he was going to be able to follow its growth still further when he went to Palestine, which holds the heart of the highest spiritual thought given to man. In Egypt he was surrounded with the evidences of how very gradually and how wonderfully man's spiritual needs had been ministered to, how surely if slowly they had evolved, how almost unnoticed man's spiritual being had advanced until he was ready for the master-mind of Jesus. The mental condition which required the worship of the Apis bull had been given the Apis bull ; the mentality which

propitiated the Crocodile with gold and silver and jewels at Crocodilopolis had been given that form of worship; and this surely not through man's stupidity or perverseness, but by the amazing law of man's spiritual evolution. And to Peter one of the strangest things was that during all these periods there had come into the world seers and prophets who had been rejected and persecuted because the rest of mankind was not ready for their high teaching. Socrates and Akhnaton were examples of this. The whole thing was very like a boy's life at school: the different classes for the different ages of the scholars, the work growing and growing with the mental development of the students, until they reached the stage of the professors' classes. The Jews had gone as far as they could go, with the result that at last they were retrograding in place of progressing, although the people were in need of more spiritual enlightenment; and it was to meet that need that Jesus came.

These thoughts, and others far too subtle for adequate verbal expression, the burning thoughts which the buried civilisation of Egypt evoke even in the most matter-of-fact minds by their staggering revelations, often kept Peter in a condition extraordinary to his everyday self. He became a Peter whom Patricia did not know, whom she never would know. It was tremendously difficult not to think wholly new thoughts in Egypt, thoughts new to the mind of a man educated at an English public school and accustomed only to Western civilisation and habits of thought. For thought becomes habit, be it Eastern or Western.

Peter's subconscious summing-up of what he felt about Egypt was a strange mixture. He had been more interested than happy. The "worn" feeling was not pleasant and, had he known it, had proved strangely ageing. He had only been in the making when he parted from Patricia in London, but Egypt is a marvellous forcing-house. As he said to himself when he stood amongst the ruins of the city of Thebes, the world's first splendid capital: "Your youth and your middle-age and your senile years become one; they have as little real meaning to the world as the butterfly of a day." This "worn feeling" sometimes made him wonder whether it would affect him greatly if Patricia after all did not want him, if upon seeing him she should change her mind. Why not be done with it all, when the longest life that a man can live makes a mere fool of him?

Often Peter's healthy virile youth felt angry and outraged, rebelled against the pitiless age of Egypt; his spirit shrank from these past civilisations, shivered at them. They insulted his youth and its self-importance. Thebes made him want to get drunk, the force of it was so joy-killing. The fallen monu-

ments and the sense of man's futility made his senses hunger for his green farm, for his crops and his cows, with their moist warm breath, and for all his scientific experiments, for all these things which only so short a time ago had seemed of such vast importance. They had promised permanent results, and now he realised that nothing is permanent except the paramount law of Nature.

He felt a loneliness in Egypt which he had never felt anywhere before, and it was intensified by the certainty that had Patricia been with him instead of his very practical and health-seeking uncle he could no more have shared these thoughts with her than with the old man. This troubled him, for he was still youthful enough to imagine that his feeling of loneliness was due to some stupidity of his own, some inability to express his innermost thoughts, a lack of understanding of Patricia's real self.

Poor Peter, he was indeed growing up. He was beginning to face the fact that there is no hermit like man's inner self, none so alone. Egypt, with its cruel age and its ghostly whisperings, with its pitiless unconcern for youth and youth's idealism, was rushing on his retarded evolution, forcing his spiritual awakening. During these three absorbing weeks he had passed through many classes in the school of life, he had been making up for lost time. . . . And Egypt was a splendid preparation for Palestine ; the sequence was as it should be.

But of course Peter did not spend all his time in speculation and sight-seeing, and he dropped something of what Egypt had effected in him during the last four days in Cairo, where he was unexpectedly dragged into a round of social gaieties, owing to the introductions which his uncle had brought and presented to highly important residents. The change from the desert of Upper Egypt, the monuments of its past civilisations and its cemeteries amongst the Theban hills, was so sudden and so violent that Peter began to accept all that he had seen and felt as a vivid and exhausting dream from which it was almost a relief to awake into his old every-day train of thought—thoughts of Patricia and his farm : Patricia in comparison with the belles of Cairo ; his farm and how it was getting along without him. And, apart from these purely personal things, there was the highly interesting subject of modern Egypt and its self-government to engross his mind in the continual discussions which always arose wherever men forgathered.

Water was, of course, one of the subjects most frequently on the *tapis*, for at that particular time the Egyptian government was trying to persuade itself and the people generally that the British were going to jockey Egypt out of the water which she

considered her right, and give to the Sudan some of that necessary and vital supply which comes into Egypt with the inundations of the Nile. The people responsible for the discontent and anger which the scare created probably did not believe a word of it themselves, they knew British honour too well for that : but it constituted a valuable political propaganda. Not only Egypt for the Egyptians, but all the water of the Nile for Egypt, was their slogan, regardless of the fact that their Mother Nile has her Sudanese children to think of as well as her more prosperous Egyptian offspring.

During his night journey to Palestine all these things dropped from Peter like a cloak from off his shoulders ; there was no room in his being for anything but Patricia. He was once more very nearly the same Peter who had parted from her in London. Very nearly, but not quite. Patricia had said that no thinking person could go to Palestine and come back the same as he went, and that statement was equally true, nay truer, about Egypt, and Peter had found it so. Yet, during that night journey to Jerusalem he was so much his old self that over and over again while he lay in his sleeper in the darkness he forgot where he was, forgot that he was travelling thus comfortably and swiftly across the very land through which Moses tried to lead the Children of Israel. He was accomplishing in one single night what it had taken those Biblical wanderers forty years to accomplish, traversing ground immortalised a second time in history by the amazing efforts of the British troops. It must be admitted that Peter, owing to his condition of mind as regards Patricia, took that railway journey very much for granted ; he did not reflect upon the fact that the building of that line had cost on an average twenty-seven British lives to every kilometre over which his sleeper passed, that the whole distance cost ten thousand British soldiers, that at the beginning of the job our men, who were magnificently helped by the Egyptian Labour Corps, called it the "Milk and Honey Railway," but finding nothing but sand all the way, changed that pleasant title in the end for that of "The Desert Railway." He forgot that he had lived through a portion of the world's most astounding history. He was young, and he was going to meet the girl he loved ; and temperamentally he was very like the boys who had called the line "The Milk and Honey Railway," any one of whom would probably have behaved just as he was doing, taking it all for granted because he was only conscious of one supreme fact—that very soon Patricia would be in his

arms, that he would be seeing her exquisite pale beauty, that ungrudgingly now, because they were engaged, she would confess that she really wanted him. Seeing Patricia meant so much more to him than seeing any place in the world, even Jerusalem.

He had quite got over that Egyptian "worn" feeling. He was exulting in his manhood. And youth can work itself up into a fine frenzy of romantic passion. Peter had thought about Patricia, nursed her image and his love for her in his heart, until he had made himself even more in love with her than he had been when he parted from her in London.

How greatly the reverse had it been with Francis Daubigny. The older man—older temperamentally as well as in years—had fought against her persistent invasion of his senses ; he had driven her image from his mind as determinedly, if less successfully, than the hermit St. Anthony drove away the visions of the flesh which assailed him in his cave in the desert. Francis was not in love with love, very far from it ; he had certainly not consciously and deliberately courted it.

Peter, on the other hand, had courted it ; he had felt not a little annoyed when Patricia's image left his senses, when Egypt's silent voices drowned her human laughter, when her "maddening smile," as Francis Daubigny called it, lost itself in the inscrutable gaze of the Sphinx.

CHAPTER X

IN the big, unhomey salon of the Casa Nova, Peter Armitage was waiting impatiently for Patricia Paget, and she was not to blame for having kept him waiting. A Hospice run on economical principles does not spend money on a larger staff of house-servants than necessity demands. It had taken someone some time in that rambling edifice to find the busy Nazaraina and get a message through to Patricia.

Peter had looked on every ugly object in the room—and they were many ; offerings in the way of thanksgiving for free board and lodging from poor pilgrims, who all seemed to have loved pink roses painted on brighter pink satin cushions, and vases decorated with pictures of the Church of the Holy Sepul-

chre or the Mount of Olives: presents from the Holy Land, in fact.

He had looked out from the high windows, and had quickly turned away from them again, for the windows of the salon did not look out on to Patricia's cobbled street, but over the kitchen premises and down into a plain, paved, unlovely court-yard.

There was nothing about the place that he could associate with Patricia's love of beauty.

On the two tables in the centre of the room he had found only pamphlets and papers relating to the Franciscan missions in various parts of the world, with just a few ancient newspapers left behind by pilgrims from Central Europe or Southern America — Mexico and Brazil. Extremely interesting, no doubt, to those who like that sort of thing. Under the circumstances, waiting for Patricia, he really didn't care a hang if he never heard of any of the places again.

He was thoroughly "fed-up," in fact, when at last the door opened and Patricia came into the "deadly room," as he had called it to himself . . . came in, and changed it all, made it live.

He sprang across its length to meet her, with both his hands held out, his face showing his relief and delight.

And Patricia held out her hands, too, and allowed him to draw her closer to himself—almost into his arms.

"Have you been waiting long? I came directly they told me you were here, but it's a big place."

"It seems like years," Peter said, "but I suppose it wasn't twenty minutes, really."

Patricia's eyes scanned the tables. "As long as that? And nothing to read but missionary reports, and nothing to look at! Poor Peter!" Her voice betrayed her nervousness, her uncertainty. . . .

"It is pretty awful, isn't it?" he smiled. "The room, I mean. But I've got you to look at now, so it doesn't matter."

Again he drew her almost into his arms, but Patricia kept the distance at "almost."

"Oh, but it isn't all like this. My bedroom is heavenly. And even this room—if you saw it at night when it's full of the most extraordinary collections of humans you ever set eyes on, you wouldn't say it was awful. It certainly isn't dull. In the daytime it's just a waiting-room, no one sits in it except to address postcards to friends at home. But you should see the funny crowds I see o' night, and hear their funny languages! It's amusing just to sit and watch them being presented to some

important dignitary of their Church. Poor tired souls, they can scarcely keep awake. They begin their day at dawn by going to Mass—I can hear them all hurrying down the long street under my window—and they go on ‘doing’ holy sites the whole day long, except when they come back to the Hospice for their three meals. And then you should see them eat! See their greedy eyes peeping at the food while their padre is saying an interminable grace before they can begin! Poor hungry, tired souls, how they set to and eat, and eat!” She sighed. “It’s the only really human thing they do all day, I suppose.”

She sighed again, and ended her rather breathless and forced description of the daily routine of the pilgrims who had become an integral part of her daily life, with the words: “I do wish I could make you see the variety of types and costumes. . . . I sincerely hope they find it worth while, poor tired wrecks of what they once were!”

Peter gave her a quick scrutiny. This wasn’t the old Patricia. There was something new about her, something he couldn’t express, even to himself. This Pat was unfamiliar to him. Would she have doubted it worth their while two months ago? His own new outlook on things while in Egypt rushed through him. He spoke with an air of abstraction which was not lost on Patricia.

“Have *you* found it worth while?” he said. “Are you glad or sorry you came? Are you disappointed with Jerusalem?”

“Oh, you can’t be disappointed! You may . . .” Patricia hesitated. “Well, I can’t explain what you may feel about it, and what you may *not* feel about it—but you will soon find that out for yourself. . . . What I mean is—I think it’s the most fascinating and wonderful city I have ever seen, but of course, I haven’t seen very much—nothing Oriental—before.” She paused. Her eyes were thoughtful, downcast. She raised them with a smile. “When did you arrive, Peter?”

“A few hours ago. I just had a brush-up and deposited my belongings.”

“Where?”

“The Hotel St. John.”

“Lucky man! It’s the best. . . . But you did see the walls, and the citadel as you drove from the station!” She spoke emotionally. “You did pass under the arch of the Jaffa Gate!”

“Of course.” He smiled at her enthusiasm. “And that’s all I have seen so far, Pat. And perhaps it was you I was seeing, not the walls or the gate.” His eyes looked into hers.

“Two of the best things there are to be seen.” Patricia felt guilty while his eyes adored her—avoided the personality.

"I love that early morning market outside the Jaffa Gate. I could stand looking at it for hours, watching the sneering camels, the mad mixture of costumes, and the most picturesque thing of all, the devout Moslems praying on their mats just anywhere and at all times. You certainly have to see Jerusalem before you can realise how Oriental it is, and how Mohammedan. It's so associated with the word 'Christianity' in our minds—at least it was in mine—that I was awfully surprised to find how little Christianity seems to have affected it." She paused. "I don't think many people at home realise that fact, Peter. They certainly don't realise the enormous appeal that Islam seems to have for Eastern minds. And I can't find out why, or where its hold comes in. It's so exacting and so cold, and yet it has the most wonderful power. Catholics seem to me to get the same help and ecstasy out of their beliefs, and yet they are poles apart."

"How have you learnt about the Mohammedans?" he asked. He could understand her seeing the Roman Catholic point of view, living in this Hostel of Franciscan missionaries. But how had she come across the other? Very curious was this angle from which she was seeing Jerusalem, so unexpected in Patricia.

"Oh, I've been reading about the teaching of the Prophet, so as to get to know something of what people are driving at." She stopped, and then added, less forcedly: "An awfully nice man I travelled with on the boat lent me some helpful, easy books on the subject, and I've gathered a good deal from them. The East is a sealed book unless you know something about the teachings of Mohammed. You must have discovered that."

Peter's eyes became worried. Patricia saw them change.

An "awfully nice man" had travelled with her on the boat, had lent her books! . . . Had this anything to do with the subtle change he had sensed in her . . . her nervous anxiety to prevent him from talking to her of the personal things which occupied both their subconsciousness? It was so unlike Pat to rattle on with such lengthy discussions on abstract matters—things quite outside their own concerns, or so he thought them, when she had come to Palestine because she had found out that she loved him.

Suddenly he put his arms lightly round her. He supposed she was shy.

"Dearest," he said, "need I be jealous? I *am* jealous already, but need I be?"

Patricia laughed and accepted his caress. She was, after all, eager and ready for human love and sympathy. Although she had not invited it, and it was only human sympathy and affec-

tion she wanted from Peter, not a lover's passion, she simply could not turn it away!

"Haven't I followed you to Palestine, Peter?"

Her smile made him kiss her—and while he kissed her, Patricia remembered his photograph, and how his lips in it had changed into the lips of the Anglo-Arab; how his arms had become the long, lean, strong arms of the desert-burnt Francis Daubigny. . . . If only fate had arranged things differently; if only she had never met the Anglo-Arab, or if he had been Peter!

She hid her guilt on his breast. Her senses hungered for the right man to love her, but if the right man wasn't there . . . ?

"Was it me you followed, dearest? Really me? You found you wanted me? . . . Oh, my darling, if it was! . . ." He turned up her blushing face to meet his eager eyes. "Was it, Pat? Did you really miss me enough to follow me?"

"I just packed up and followed you!" Her evasive answer satisfied him, for why else had she come?

He crushed her small breasts closer to his own. Her slenderness and her softness made him feel his own coarse manhood. In the old days he had never known how feminine Pat was, how slender. With him love was not blind, it had opened his eyes.

"But the nice man on the boat? He had come after the packing up?" the thought made him say. "When he was with you all those confounded days at sea, did you ever miss Peter for a moment?" He knew only too well how absorbed Patricia could be in the present, if her interests were aroused. He searched her lovely eyes, always lovelier when someone was loving her. Love was as necessary to Patricia as sunshine is to a flower.

She laughed. "He wasn't with me much on the boat, silly old thing! He left me to the tender mercies of the most exquisite creature in the form of man I ever saw! Really, he was too beautiful to fall in love with. And only because you must have seen in Egypt some of those perfectly beautiful young Arabs, can you understand how really lovely a man can be without looking un-manly. People at home, who haven't travelled, can't begin to imagine them. If you were to descant on the beauty of these exquisite Eastern types, they would think you were going dotty over some barber's block, or a 'pretty-pretty' type of man, or a Valentino. Wouldn't they now?"

Peter nodded. He had seen the sort of Eastern type she meant.

"But you needn't get jealous of him, Peter. I don't want a man like that," Patricia said earnestly. "I prefer a more

faulty, human type to a Greek god. I think an ordinary being would be less faulty in nature."

Peter had lost his worried look. Patricia had drawn him cleverly off the trail of the "awfully nice man." She had evidently not seen much of him; and as for the Adonis—Peter didn't care a straw about him. He knew Pat too well to fear him.

"You're so lovely yourself, Pat, I'll always be terrified—jealous of almost anyone!" He spoke lightly, but there was a great deal of truth in his words, and Patricia knew it.

"You never used to be, in the old days, Peter!"

"In the old days I wasn't in love with you."

"Yet I was just as easy to look at!" she smiled.

"I know it, but I didn't really see you until love opened my eyes. I told you in London what a blind ass I was."

"Do you really like me, Peter? Not just my prettiness—*me*, myself? Do you honestly think I'm nice, that I'd be a nice companion to spend your life with, or are you just in love with me?"

"I'd want you, Pat, if you were *ugly*. Of course it's yourself I want, not only your prettiness, if you mean that. Do you really think I'm like that?" Peter was speaking sincerely, because he did not dream that his fondness for Patricia as a friend, his real liking for her, was a deeper thing than his love for her as a lover.

For answer Patricia held up her lips. "Then take me," she said, "just as I am, and whatever I am!" She dropped her head on his breast. She had taken the plunge.

Suddenly her body gave a convulsive shudder; he felt her vitality ebb, she became limp in his arms.

"What is it, Pat? What's the matter?" he cried.

She could not answer. He held her more protectingly, pressed her head more closely to his breast, without speaking and without kissing her. Just held her. His arms were what she needed. Human arms to make a sanctuary for her lonely soul. . . . And Peter's arms were soothing, reassuring her, helping her to forget.

"How dear of you, Peter," she whispered at last. "How dear of you still to want me. How nice of you not to have changed."

Peter kissed her white throat and her whiter eyelids and her pale, fine face. Her exotic beauty seemed to him now to have the delicacy and the perfume of a flower grown under glass to protect it from the cruel winds of the world. . . . He kissed her, and he was so delighted with his own happiness that

Patricia's vitality returned. His pleasure had charged her devitalised senses.

"Thank you, Peter, thank you!" she said softly. "I was so lonely! I so wanted someone to love me."

"*Someone!*" The words affected Peter unpleasantly.

She "so lonely"! She "so wanted *someone* to love her"! . . . And he, Peter, had come along at the right moment—so *he would do!* Was that it? Ah, Peter, if you had only known how much these words were to affect your future, they would not have troubled you. Poor little soul! she had had a loveless life. Well brought up—perhaps too well brought up for one of her peculiar temperament—by her Aunt Harriet, but brought up quite lovelessly. If as yet this was why she wanted him he must, he supposed, be satisfied; the greater love might come.

These thoughts flooded his subconscious mind, but he was sufficiently in love not to allow Patricia's escaped confession to spoil his happiness. Pat wanted him, and he wanted Pat, and that was all that mattered. She had offered herself to him, as she was, and what she was . . . a man must be the frozen limit if he wasn't satisfied with that!

They sat down side by side on the long, straight, unsympathetic divan, if such a seat could be called a divan, which ran along one side of the room with less response in its upholstery than there is in the upholstery of furniture on the hirc system for happy homes. When he left her it was with the promise that he might return to her after dinner.

CHAPTER XI

AFTER dinner, when Peter arrived at the Casa Nova, he found Patricia waiting for him in the public salon, where she told him they could have almost an hour alone together, because the pilgrims had dined an hour later than usual, owing to the fact that they had been an hour late in getting back from Jericho. For the last ten minutes they had been discussing their plans for sight-seeing, the future plans for Palestine.

"I'm rather a broken reed to lean on, Peter. Remember I've only been in Palestine three weeks." . . . She looked at

him sharply. "I do so wonder how you will like it all, seeing these holy places as they are to-day. Do you remember I said, before I came away, that Palestine"—she hesitated—"well . . . that . . . that whatever you believe in, or think you *don't* believe in, seeing Palestine must have its effect upon your beliefs or disbeliefs. You can't think just the same after you've seen it. You will believe more, or you will believe less. I wonder what it will be with you?"

"How has it affected you, Pat?" His voice betrayed that he was more nervous of her answer than his words implied. He didn't want her to accept his love only because she believed less—was lonely.

"It's made me want you," she said simply.

"Then thank God you came!" He spoke tenderly, gratefully. "I scarcely dared to hope, Pat. I didn't let myself think what Jerusalem and all your Anglo-Catholic friends would do for you . . . send you into a convent, perhaps!" If coming had made her want him, then he did thank God—yet he wished she had wanted him in London.

"Well, it's made me feel quite different. I'm so little the same, Peter, that perhaps you won't want me."

She was holding one of his hands in hers, playing with his fingers, thinking how extraordinarily different they were from the long, lean, sun-tanned hands of Francis Daubigny. . . .

"It really has made me so different, that you don't know the Patricia you're engaged to one bit." She laughed. "I suppose you do consider yourself engaged to me, don't you?"

"I should jolly well think I do!" His voice showed a return of anxiety, jealousy. But was it just Palestine, was it not something else that had so changed the old Pat?

"Well, I don't think it's the Church that need come between us any more. And it was the Church and your un-churchiness which was the stumbling-block."

Peter's expression showed his surprise.

"I don't any longer think," she explained, "that it's the least bit necessary for a good Christian to belong to any Church. Indeed, it seems to me that, in Jerusalem, it's exceedingly difficult to find any good *Christians* in any of their queer kind of churches, which all seem to hate each other and fight like Kilkenny cats when they can get a chance. They do make a mockery of the word Christian, Peter, honestly they do."

"But that's the Eastern Christians, Pat, surely!" He spoke with asperity.

"Well, wasn't Christ an Eastern Christian? Wasn't it here that the Church started? Anyhow, I've lost my 'churchian'

religion, as you call it. . . . But you don't seem a bit glad that our stumbling-block has suddenly been removed!"

She turned to him, and spoke more eagerly.

"I can't tell you how I've lost my 'churchian' faith, but it's just gone. All the endless ceremonial of these un-Christ-like Christian churches I've visited has just dragged every inch of it away from me. Left me without any bit of caring for any sort or kind of creed, or religious sect or form, or——" She stopped abruptly, as though words failed her to express her condition. . . . "It seems to me that ritual and ceremonial create hate instead of love—always have done."

"My darling." Peter put his arms round her. "I'm only human, and of course I'm glad that the wall between our minds is knocked down; but——" he stopped. "But——" he held her more closely, "if it has made you unhappy, and more lonely—if that is why you wanted me—if you just feel thrown back on yourself——" He, too, stopped abruptly.

"Oh, I don't know. How can I know? Anyhow, it has made me want you, and I said you could have me just as I am and whatever I am; and if you *don't* want me as I am—and probably you don't, for that's just like life!—well, you needn't bother. I'll do without you."

Tears were trying to find their way into Patricia's proud eyes.

"Not want you, Pat?"

He scouted the words, and even while he did so he still doubted the girl's love for him, doubted its being that love he knew her capable of feeling for the man whom she might yet hunger to mate with. But at present that man did not exist, and Peter was willing to risk it, and try to make her love him in such a way that the likelihood of her ever meeting him would cease to exist.

"I'm so glad, old girl, so awfully glad! I always felt that you would see things as I see them."

In his arms she shook her head. "I don't know about that." She smiled. "I've just lost my flair for any ritual or ceremonial or set forms and—well, just the general paraphernalia of the Anglo-Catholic Church. It seems to have suddenly lost, for me, all connection with Jesus and what He wanted us to believe and to be. Since I've been here it all seems to have absolutely nothing to do with the true life or the teachings of Jesus the Genius from Nazareth, as Louis Tricoupis calls him. Church ritual now looks to me absolutely mechanical and unreal. . . . For our realistic day it's quite out of keeping, surely. It's so mediæval!"

She smiled. "When I've been standing quietly watching in the Armenian Christian church, or in the Orthodox Greek church, during one of their big festivals, I've wondered whatever Jesus would have made of it all, if He just walked into Jerusalem from Galilee with Andrew and Peter, and found Himself in front of one of these strange altars, saw these elaborately attired priests. Just the ritual of the synagogue in a different form."

Peter was silent. He had always felt certain this would happen, but he had never expected it to happen so quickly.

"I thought you would be glad," Patricia said, "for even if I don't see things quite as you do yet, still our minds will be more in touch, there is not such a wide gulf between them now; but I can't pretend, Peter, that I'm happier than I was, apart from the pleasure of feeling that our minds are more in sympathy on that big point——" She hesitated, and toyed with the lapel of his coat. "You see, the Church has been, up till now, such an intimate part of my life; it has been the pleasantest part of it since I left school, and I thought the spiritual part of it . . ." She smiled. "Superstitions, and the belief in a supernatural power rather than in a wholly natural one, seem really harder to get out of the human system than coloured blood. The true teachings of Mohammed are mostly free from superstition, Peter, but as I said, Islam could never have made the marvellous headway it has if the propagandists of the prophet's teachings hadn't seen that it was wise to allow his followers, the insistent believers in One God whose prophet was Mohammed, to believe also in a thousand and one genii and every sort of black and white magic you can imagine."

"All Orientals are full of superstition, Pat. So are most people, if you come to think of it; the more primitive, the more superstitious, of course."

"They really no more believe in One God who decrees all things for good or for evil than the Jews believe in our Trinity of Gods, our Three in One. . . . And, oh, Peter!" She stopped and drew in a deep breath. "I've been to the Wall of Wailing! Why didn't anyone tell me about it? It's the most tragic and the most pitiful sight you ever saw, and although the Jews hate Christians and strangers going to that wall to watch them, yet anti-Jews say that they do it all for effect, that they pay people to go and wail there and pray their really wonderful prayers against that poor last remaining bit of their City of David."

Peter was listening, wondering. . . .

"Old, old men and old, old women, with faces so haunted with longing and suffering that at last you say to yourself you have seen a living human being so accustomed to sorrow and

so acquainted with grief that you now know something of what the spiritual suffering of Jesus meant. You feel a sickening shame fill your puny soul for the mockery of Christianity for what so-called Christians have made of His teaching. . . . Fancy allowing our hate to accumulate for all these years! Why, instead of despising them, we conservative British should bow down before their loyalty and their suffering for the God they have clung to and worshipped as He was worshipped by Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and by all the prophets. Really, Peter, I felt so ashamed of myself that I cried. Just because they don't believe in what we have been brought up to believe in—and don't really believe in one bit—we despise them and hate them! We really believed we wouldn't hate them. How could we? Jesus said 'God is Love.'"

Peter looked at her curiously. How much Palestine had done for her in a few weeks!

"I mean," she added, "religious hatreds are awful. No matter what the side is, it always ends by becoming fanatical and bigoted, and unjust to anyone who differs from them in belief."

"But didn't St. Paul like them to be either hot or cold?" Peter smiled.

"Can a leopard change his spots? He was a good hand at persecuting the Christians before he became one himself, wasn't he? He was always a bigot. I get to like Peter so much"—she laughed—"Simon called Peter, I mean. He was quite a dear. I think I'll have to call you Simon! Peter was called that before he was converted, wasn't he?"

Patricia sighed.

"Oh, I've so much to talk about—do stop me from running on!"

He kissed her smiling lips. "Go on, darling," he said tenderly, "I love to hear you."

"Well, I do really begin to get the characters of all these men more clearly before me, and Peter is my pet—he was so impulsive, and so human. You'll find yourself reading your New Testament here, in Palestine, as you never read it before. It becomes a sort of Baedeker you can't do without. And besides being the best guide-book, it is centuries more alive here than at home. It is a thrilling drama, perfectly staged, Peter. But for me, somehow, the Old Testament seems to—well, just to belong to the Jews . . . to slip away from you all the same. The Jews are wonderful people, Peter. There is nothing in all Jerusalem I admire more than their unshakable, their steadfast adherence to their convictions. And surely faith is a condition

of the mind. We can't *make* ourselves believe, can we? We can, so the Church says, put ourselves in a condition of mind to be deserving and ready for the spirit of grace to be bestowed upon us . . . but with the Jews that condition for the reception of the Christian faith was unthinkable—and sinful! But if they were, according to their own lights, living spiritually up to their faith, why was the spirit of grace withheld from them?"

Peter, being no theologian, could only shake his head.

"Ask me something easier, Pat. Great is the mystery of godliness. It's past my understanding, and I'm afraid always will be."

"How I've bored you, Peter! But it's just Palestine."

"Pat—" he protested.

"Oh, but interested travellers do bore everybody but themselves . . . and I know I'm just bursting with Palestine! It's right up to here!" She pointed to her pretty throat. "Palestine is not lovely, it isn't even picturesque, except in patches, but it's—well, I don't know how to express it. You'll know what I mean when you've been here a little while."

She leaned her boyish head on his shoulder. "I think it's made me older, Peter, and less—credulous. More detached."

"It's made you mine!" he said. "And if it's done that, I'll love every inch of it, ugly or beautiful!"

CHAPTER XII

PETER'S arms were round Patricia when a brown-frocked Father with sandalled feet walked noiselessly into the long room, to cross from one door to the other. He stopped abruptly, and looked quizzically at Patricia. He had taken a liking to the English girl, and if he was a monk, his habit covered a very human heart.

Patricia caught the look of surprise in his bright, searching eyes.

"Father Tommasso," she said, "let me introduce to you my *fiancé* who travelled from Cairo last night. He has just arrived."

Peter blushed furiously, but the natural simplicity which was his boyish charm made him do the right thing.

"I am still rather bewildered, sir," he said. "You see,

Miss Paget has just consented to marry me, and . . . well, I hope you will give us your blessing."

Father Tommasso laughed delightedly. Being Italian there was little in human nature that was unknown to him. He blessed them, and added to his blessing the words: "Let it be a blessed augury, my son, that you found human love as well as spiritual love waiting for you in this city of love."

Patricia looked into his bright, blazing eyes.

"But is Jerusalem that, father? Can you truly say that? That it is a city of love?"

"One day," he answered, "the children of all Christian Churches will be one happy family. They will have their eyes opened; they will walk in the way of light. And who knows how soon that day will be, now that the Infidel no longer controls the sites which are sacred to all true believers?"

He shrugged his shoulders. True believers, to Father Tommasso, meant, naturally, believers in the Catholic faith according to Rome, the Latin Church, not the Greek-Orthodoxy or the Anglo-Catholicism of Patricia's friends. The "happy family" could only be united under one roof. . . . "Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia."

"Remember, if you love not your brother whom you have seen, how can you love Him whom ye have not seen?"

He said the words cheerfully, then, with a low bow and a smiling face, he passed out of the room.

"The dear man!" Patricia said. "He is such a *savant*, and yet he runs this *pension* for pilgrims, and most of them are as ignorant as English donkeys! He sees to their creature comforts, or rather, to their actual necessities, and attends to all the accounts. . . . And how the petty round must get on his nerves, poor man. Yet he is always the same happy, sympathetic host."

"Rather a waste of good material, what?"

"Oh, but it's beautiful!" The emotional part of Patricia's nature approved of this waste, and her approval glowed in her lovely eyes, most lovely at such moments because of the complexity of emotions they revealed or tried to subdue.

"The old Pat," Peter said to himself, "the old Pat, fired with the religion of self-renunciation—that religion utterly opposed to her other self, her truer self."

"Beautiful, perhaps," he said, "but all the same, wasteful. And is waste ever really beautiful? Some other brother, less intellectually endowed, could do what he is doing equally well."

"That is how the materialistic mind sees it!" said Patricia

loftily. She paused. "He loves giving up his own interests and his own intellectual work for the service of the Saviour he adores."

"Then if he enjoys it there isn't any sacrifice," Peter argued.

There was silence again; a heavy silence this time. Then Patricia said slowly:

"I didn't say he enjoyed doing the tiresome, uninteresting work. I said he enjoyed sacrificing his own interests to those of his Saviour."

"But if those interests could be served equally well by someone whom his Saviour had not endowed with unusual gifts, what then?" persisted Peter.

Patricia frowned. "Oh, I don't know! . . . You can argue round a barrow about anything!" Peter was about as destructive as Louis Tricoupis, but . . . well—no—she would not allow herself to say, "not as interesting."

"His Saviour, Pat," he went on, "is the Saviour his Church has created, the Saviour who is greedy for the self-sacrifices and the renunciations of mankind just as the Jehovah of Israel and the gods of Egypt were greedy for the sacrifice of flesh and blood. Do you think there is any real virtue in waste? Personally, I think the monks who spend their time in praying for the redemption of mankind are using their time much better, because we all know how powerful the effect of man's mind is upon mankind, when it is united and earnestly fixed on one object. They at least aren't burying their talents in a napkin, wasting precious material."

"It all depends, as I said before, upon what you call waste."

"Well—not putting things to their proper use is waste. Using up force and energy on the wrong objects is waste. Putting men into round holes, and *vice versa*. We saw enough of that sort of waste in the War, Pat."

"Oh, don't!" she cried. She spoke nervously. "Let's taboo religious discussions."

"I'll promise you I'll leave the subject alone. Religious discussion always creates dispeace."

Patricia sighed. "But that's just what one can't do here—leave it alone," she said. "You simply can't leave religion alone. It meets you at every step. It's the very spirit of the land—believing or disbelieving."

"But surely not controversy and squabbling about non-essential things."

She stopped his lips with hers. "Let's just be human lovers, Peter, contented with each other." She looked up at him entreatingly. "Let us love each other so much that

nothing else matters, so much that we won't think about anything else."

"My darling, pray God I can make you feel like that about our love for each other!" He drew her closer to him. This was a totally new Patricia. Was this what Palestine had done for her? He welcomed the thought.

"If you feel like that about me, Peter, I will, I will! Oh, Simon," she cried with a little catch in her voice, "I will, if you won't change, if something will remain just as it always has been, if you'll be your old self for me to cling to! I'm tired of things changing, tired of my own new self."

"No fear of my changing, Pat! I'll be your Simon until death us do part, if you'll give me the chance."

Later they separated. Patricia was to make whatever plans appealed to her most. Peter placed himself in her hands. He was a stranger in a strange land.

As he walked back to his hotel, along David Street, that long, narrow, congested, and amazingly Oriental thoroughfare which leads from the glare and sunshine of the public square under the citadel walls, into semi-darkness, to the seclusion and breath-catching beauty of the Mosque of Omar, Peter paid but scant attention to the people about him or the things he passed. Once he was almost banged on the head by the legs of a nimble figure swinging in the air. It was merely the vendor of fruits and green vegetables, swinging himself up to and over his fancifully displayed wares into his cubby-hole in the wall, by the aid of an iron chain suspended from the front of his richly provisioned store, consisting of tiers of shelves covered with flat baskets full of the first fruits of the earth, tempting spring vegetables and still more tempting Eastern fruits from Cairo. Peter had never seen such artistry displayed in the arrangement of greengrocery, nor such agility in a salesman: the man was able to drop like a bird on its nest, into just the right spot amongst it all. His attention had, however, only been drawn to the amazing wealth of vegetables when his own awkwardness caused the greengrocer's nimble feet—which had cleverly avoided Peter's head—to tip over two baskets, one full of scarlet capsicums and one piled high with lusciously yellow loquats.

There was something in Peter's straightforward, genuine regret, in his British honesty of apology, which quickly changed the angry merchant's expression. The clumsy dog of an Englishman had meant no harm. It was a part of his national madness to walk as if the street belonged to him. Why couldn't he have known that a man had to swing himself up with a leap

to get into his shop when he had no other way of entering it ? But there—Allah had made them what they were. And it was certainly part of Peter's love-madness at the moment which had prevented him seeing the swaying figure.

He would have smiled if he had understood the exquisite phraseology of the man's acceptance of his clumsiness—but for the time being he was almost unconscious of the fact that he was actually walking through the busiest street in Jerusalem.

The incident helped to bring him back to the absurd certainty of the fact. It rudely banished from his senses Patricia's bodily nearness, her clinging softness which had been like a physical reality, until the fruit-seller's anger brought him back sharply to the objective present.

Yes—he was in Jerusalem ! This narrow street was called after the sweet singer of Israel, the author of the most widely-read poems in the world. All these jostling, hurrying figures, these quick black donkeys, piled high with green fodder, these slow, insolent camels, might be wending their way to some gigantic stage. "Hassan," perhaps, might be the drama ! . . . Yes, he, Peter Armitage, was in Jerusalem. It was much harder to believe it in this crowded thoroughfare where all the green food in the world seemed to be piled up on either side of him in neat hole-in-the-wall shops, than it had been to believe that, amid the desolation of Memphis and Thebes, he had been standing on the sites of the world's first cities of magnificence and splendour ! Once conscious of the fact of all that was going on around him, Patricia, and the change he found in her, was pushed out of the picture. Jerusalem claimed him.

At Karnak, where he had stood by moonlight and alone in the largest temple ever made with hands for the worship of any god, he had been acutely aware of the vanity and arrogance of Rameses the Great. At Tel-el-Amana, that city of Akhnaton where the "desolation of nothingness" is even greater than at Carthage, he had felt the influence of the earliest forerunner of Jesus, who, like Jesus, was compelled to leave his own city because "a prophet is not without honour save in his own country," because it would not tolerate his strange doctrine of love.

. . . But here, in Jerusalem, in all this strange hubbub, where was Jesus ? Nowhere. Just nowhere ! And yet Jerusalem had always been, in his thoughts, identified with Jesus, the scene of His last tragedy.

As he pushed his way through the Oriental crowd, Peter was so amused and interested that he quickly forgot his youthful visualising of Jerusalem. The present was too exciting ; the care he had to take of his own person as he went further down

the street too great to allow of any reflections. Turning on his left as Pat had told him to do at a certain point, he eventually arrived at the Hotel St. John, which seemed to him at the moment a haven of stillness after the noise of David Street.

A few moments later he was standing on the roof-garden of the hotel, overlooking the city, gazing at its beauty, absorbed in its individuality. Mentally he was contrasting its reality with the highly-coloured print of the Crucifixion which had hung on the wall opposite his bed when he was a child. He hadn't paid much attention to the picture then, but nevertheless it had imprinted itself on his subconscious mind for all time, and now that he was gazing at the real Jerusalem, at the site of the Mount of Calvary, it came popping out from its pigeon-hole, holding itself up in contrast to what he had now before him. And here there was no "green hill far away," no suggestion of any sort of desolation for Golgotha—that "place of a skull," nothing in the least like any pictures, ancient or modern, of the city that he had ever seen. Modern artists had all chosen to paint some striking details of the city, or the city viewed from a distance, lost behind its encircling walls, and Peter was looking down upon its crowded streets and still more crowded houses. A city of mosques and Moslems. Even the Mount of Olives and the holy Hill of Zion were populous suburbs of the ever-extending city itself. It was an Oriental city, and yet how different it was from the Oriental cities in Egypt.

Subconsciously he felt a subtle annoyance, curiously jealous of the fame of Jesus, that His, the most original and daring mind the world has ever known, the only wholly creative mind, should be overlaid in this, the city of His final drama, by the mind of Mohammed, who, after all, with due allowance for his greatness, merely preached a reformed Judaism, and set before the people a higher conception of God, the one God in Whom they professed to believe, but Whom they had surrounded with idols. Why was the master mind of Jesus so overlaid in Jerusalem? Was it perhaps this very fact which had worked the change in Patricia? Was it the sense of His absence which had made her feel so lonely; was that why she wanted him, Peter? He repeated the words she had said, "I so wanted someone to love me, I was so lonely." She was tired of her "new self." Was this new self perhaps the Patricia who had come to Jerusalem to be with Jesus and had lost Him?

In the midst of his reverie the bell for *table d'hôte* sounded. Peter started; metaphorically he rubbed his eyes. He was gazing over Jerusalem, looking over its weather-worn, sunburnt golden-hued roofs, and Patricia had only half an hour ago promised to

marry him, and yet he must go and change into the dinner-kit of modern civilisation and try to behave as if nothing unusual had happened, as though he felt perfectly normal. He wondered if he would ever feel quite his old normal self again, the farmer Peter whom thought had never very much troubled. He cast a lingering glance at Zion, and as he did so the words of the well-known hymn flashed up from his subconsciousness.

"They stand, those halls of Sion
All jubilant with song,
And bright with many an Angel,
And all the martyr throng. . . ."

The halls of Zion, indeed . . . His eyes took in with another swift glance the insignificant-looking hill, but as he turned away he said: "It only looks insignificant, of course, because the whole city stands at such a great height above sea-level. No wonder they used to talk about going up to Jerusalem; from Caper-naum it certainly meant a considerable going up. Of course if the Mount of Olives rose up from the level of the Dead Sea or from the Sea of Galilee, they would look like pukka mountains, by Jove they would!"

While Peter dressed for dinner, his mind, after the manner of the male, became occupied with the practical aspects of the city, its strategic position, Allenby's entry into it, its health-giving air, so invigorating after the heat of Luxor and the hot winds of Cairo. His mood lasted while he was dressing, but while he sat through the rather lengthy *table d'hôte* his thoughts went back again to Patricia. In what frame of mind would he find her when he returned to the Casa Nova? Would he discover the true reason for her loneliness? Would she give him any greater assurance that she loved him and wanted him because he was himself? Would she be able to drive away the fear which lay at the back of his mind—that her own loneliness and not her love for him had given her to him? Just someone to love her!

CHAPTER XIII

MISS CRESSWELL had written to Patricia, urging her to join her at the Austrian Hospice on that lake which is so variously named—Bahr Tabariyeh, the Sea of Chinnereth, the Hebrew

version of Gennesaret, the Lake of Gennesaret, and the Sea of Tiberias—but which Patricia and Peter still called “The Sea of Galilee,” the name most familiar to them. And so, after three days’ sightseeing in Jerusalem, the girl had arranged that she and Peter should go there, with Miss Cresswell as her chaperone.

They motored comfortably down in the care of a young Syrian chauffeur, an expert driver. The Arab drivers were too reckless of human life for Patricia’s taste. Allah might will that she should be thrown over a precipice at one of the hairpin bends on the road between Jerusalem and the Sea of Galilee, but she preferred placing herself in the hands of a Syrian who would do his utmost to avert that catastrophe, rather than in those of a fatalistic Moslem who would resign himself—and her—to it!

The two young people had discarded all guide-books, even that *Multum in Parvo*, the little green “Notes for Travellers” which is so reliable a companion; they were just using their eyes for all they were worth. Patricia’s hands linked through Peter’s arm ready to give it little emotional squeezes whenever they passed anything which made her senses leap, a fairly frequent occurrence with Patricia.

Patricia was happy—happier than she had been since her arrival in Jerusalem, and perhaps not only the flowers but also the animals she saw around her had something to do with her happiness, for Patricia loved all animals, and until that day she had never seen leggy baby camels pulling thirstily at their mothers’ queer unmatural-looking teats.

“They were never meant to nurse their young, Peter, were they?” she cried. “Just look at that indifferent creature!”

Peter grinned. “They certainly don’t seem to be functioning very satisfactorily,” he allowed.

They both laughed happily, as they watched a wobbly-legged camel baby dive and pound and do its utmost to get what nourishment it could from itsudderless parent.

And Peter’s enjoyment of the country was every bit as great as Patricia’s, a thing she had never imagined possible until now; for what, she had often asked herself, had Palestine to offer a man like Peter, who had no definite religious beliefs? Religion, for her, had hitherto been inextricably fixed up with the idea of a definite Church. If people did not go to church and enjoy the Sacraments of the Church, how could they have any real religion? Mr. Maitland, the vicar of St. Anselm’s, had always insisted that “no real Christian, having once humbly accepted Christ as his Teacher, Leader, Saviour, would ever want to be his own authority, but would accept revelation from

God through the Church to which he belonged, as the foundation of worship and character." And Patricia had not conceived it possible, at that time, to have faith without a definite creed and definite sacraments—but so much had already happened to her that she was accepting Peter's enjoyment in a sympathetic silence.

She was, herself, neither questioning nor objecting, just "feeling her feet," as Peter always expressed it, leaving these things alone. If Palestine had brought home to her the nearness of the Son of Man and distanced the Son of God—almost wholly effaced the Christ of her Church—she wasn't for the present, if she could help it, going to dwell on these points. She was just going to drink in all the strange features of the eastern country around her—features more characteristic than beautiful—and enjoy the landscape which Jesus must have known so intimately. That was her wish.

Sometimes its desolation and its ugly, not splendid, barrenness, would call up before her eyes a vision of John the Baptist. His emaciated figure fitted into the picture, his diet of locusts and wild honey was not astonishing. . . . This was when they had left the wild flowers behind them and she was thinking to herself what a long way the wild bees must have travelled to find the nectar for their needs.

Then nature would be more gentle again, and Palestine would suit the mood of Jesus as He walked with His disciples through the cornfields. Or it would become like some green hilly place in moist Scotland, which knows no blistering sun, only quickly to change again to the same arid rocks and rolling seas of unproductive desolation.

When they were mounting to the broad plain of Ahma which saw the great battle of Hattin, where Saladin's victory put an end to the Latin rule over Jerusalem and left the land of Jesus in the hands of the Moslems until the present day, Peter was silent. He was visualising that conflict of seven hundred or more years ago. Here for him, if not for Patricia, the figure of Saladin stood out majestically in the midst of his victorious hordes. How strange it was to be driving across that historic site in a Ford motor-car, driving comfortably along a military road which owed its modern possibilities, if not its original construction, to British soldiers, descendants of the very troops whom the splendid Saladin had routed. Strange turnings of the Wheel! Christians were again a power in the land, a temporal power, if not a spiritual one. . . . But for how long? The conquest of Jerusalem never ceases.

He visualised Allenby quietly walking into the city, and as

he did so he said to himself with a pleased smile: "How well Saladin and he would have admired each other and understood one another—for Saladin, true Oriental though he was, has always been, for the English, a romantic and honourable figure in history—a white man!"

Peter was so absorbed in his thoughts that Patricia offered him the proverbial penny for them.

"I was paying my homage to Saladin," he said. "We can afford to do it now. Didn't you like 'The Talisman' better than any of Scott's novels when you were a kid?"

Patricia shook her head. "Scott? . . . I've never read a word of him. Don't look so shocked. I haven't had time yet. And as for Saladin—I didn't think anything about him until I came to Jerusalem, except as a name associated with the Crusaders; and about the Crusades I know nothing really but the word, no definite facts, I mean."

"Well, it was Scott who first made me keen about him," said Peter, "and I think the writers of fiction do a lot for historians. They make us want to know the real true facts about the characters they make so thrilling—the men and women they've turned into real flesh and blood—made human for us."

"This country is full of ghosts, but Saladin hasn't haunted it for me!" Patricia slipped her arm further through his and nestled closely to him. He put his arm round her, and reminded her that he was human, that they were man and woman, made of flesh and blood—made for love. And while he did so Patricia wondered why it was that when Peter told her things about history she wasn't thrilled as she was thrilled when the Anglo-Arab told her the same sort of things.

They had left Judea well behind them, and they were in Galilee, a greener and sweeter land, when they suddenly and abruptly came in sight of the sea, which lay in its stillness more than eight hundred feet below them and below the level of the ocean.

As they looked down at it Peter said, "Just think of it—if that water were released it would fill up the whole of this valley of the Jordan. It would be like the North Sea getting past the dykes of Holland. It's a queer country," he added reflectively.

After that practical remark Patricia and he looked down upon the quiet beauty of the Fisherman's Sea in silence. They could distinguish the collection of miserable dwellings and buildings which are all that remain of Tiberias, the city of Herod Antipas, that tetrarch of Galilee whose claim to immortality in Patricia's mind was entirely due to the fact that he had be-

headed John the Baptist to please his step-daughter and his sister-in-law and his brother Philip's wife. Patricia sensed little more of him than this, as she looked at the ruins of his city. She did not visualise him, and the ambitious woman who was at the bottom of all the mischief, dying in banishment at Lyons. He was a Biblical character, and in the Bible he must remain.

But Peter knew all about it, and had now a quick vision of that fierce war waged by the King of Arabia in revenge for the Tetrarch's insult to his daughter, whom he had divorced in order to marry Herodias, even while her husband, his own brother Philip, was still alive. He remembered that it was John the Baptist's stern denunciation of this unnatural union that was the real cause of his imprisonment and death.

"Of course," he said to Patricia, "if John the Baptist had never spoken out he might never have been put in jail, never have been beheaded 'to make a Roman holiday.' . . . Or had it been ordained, as so many things both lovely and unlovely seem to have been ordained, so that the prophecies might be fulfilled?" While he asked the question he looked down at Herod's miserable little village. He could not recollect if the Baptist's death had been foretold by the prophets or not, and as he wondered, Oscar Wilde's "Salome" which had been hotly discussed when he was a student, flashed before his mind. . . . Could the poet ever, Peter asked himself, have visualised such scenes of Eastern beauty and luxury if he had looked down, as they were looking down, upon Tiberias?

Patricia had not known that the city of Tiberias, so indissolubly linked with the name of Herod Antipas, was situated on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. So here again Peter was enjoying Palestine as she could not enjoy it; again Peter had the advantage of her, because as a boy he had been properly taught his Bible history, as history and facts. She had only learnt her Bible through her Church; its practical history meant extremely little to her.

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The Syrian cranked up the car. His passengers had spent quite enough time over this view of Bahr Tabariyeh! Time was getting on, and so must they be.

It did not take them long to run down to the level of the lake, and only a short while longer to mount again to the healthier elevation of the Austrian Hospice of St. Vincent and St. Paul at El Tabagha, "a place of seven springs" as it is aptly named from the Greek, one of the oases of barren Palestine.

This fortunate spot was probably the manufacturing suburb

of Capernaum, and is generally said to be the Bethsaida of Galilee, famed as the home of five Apostles, Peter, Andrew, Philip, James and John.

A few minutes later Patricia and Peter were standing in the Hospice garden, amid a luxuriance of semi-tropical vegetation, waiting for the Father whose duty it was to receive the freshly arrived guests and conduct them to their rooms.

He met them genially, and told them that Miss Cresswell was out, but had left a message for them, to the effect that she was spending the day at Capernaum but hoped to see them as soon as she returned.

Patricia and Peter glanced at each other with the same thought in their eyes. They had travelled through Judea and the country of Galilee, they had passed and spoken of all sorts of Biblical places and sites, they had arrived at the Sea of Galilee—yet it came with something of a shock to their ears to hear the frocked Father say tranquilly that Miss Cresswell was “spending the day in Capernaum”—just as he might have spoken of a jaunt to Brighton or a visit to Ealing!

Their host did not seem to notice anything unusual in his own words, and having delivered himself of them, he showed his visitors to their respective rooms, opening on to the long wide balcony which was raised from the level of the garden by a short flight of steps. There were, Patricia discovered, no staircases in the Hospice.

From the balcony Patricia and Peter looked right over the trees and flowering shrubs of the garden on to the Sea of Galilee, in almost its whole length and breadth.

“If St. Peter walks on the sea, Simon,” she said, “we shall get a good view of him from here, shan’t we? I feel we’re going to like the place, don’t you? . . . And I’m so glad we are in the *dépendance* and not in the bigger building—although they are both deliciously secluded.”

Peter was lost in thought and did not answer. There was something about the place, indeed there had been in the whole of Galilee, which had made him feel distanced from his objective self; it was something akin to the feeling which psychic people feel in a house which is haunted.



CHAPTER XIV

WHEN Miss Cresswell returned from Capernaum, where she had been visiting the synagogue recently excavated and partially restored—the “White Synagogue” which Jesus must have frequented with his parents—she greeted Patricia with all her old enthusiasms, her tired face glowing with religious fervour.

Patricia wished she had not at once noticed the cockle-shells suspended from a ribbon round her thin neck—noticed them to the exclusion of everything else. It was unkind of her, and horrid, she felt, but those absurd shells made her unable to respond as unreservedly as she would have liked to the dear, kind soul’s ardour. It just couldn’t be done!

Miss Cresswell’s eyes, which had always seemed to Patricia to flame with emotion, were now glowing brightly with an almost fanatical fire. Indeed, she seemed to be all eyes as she grasped the girl’s two hands in hers and asked eagerly whether Patricia was finding in Palestine the comfort and satisfaction that her aunt’s old friend had predicted for her.

There was no need for Patricia to evade the question, for Miss Cresswell’s kindly catechism ran on categorically, with no space or time for replies.

Why wasn’t she staying at the Hospice of St. George, the Anglican Hospice, in Jerusalem? Why had she chosen the Casa Nova?

Patricia suddenly felt more stiff and unresponsive than ever. She longed to drag the black ribbon sharply over Miss Cresswell’s smooth head—snatch it and its shells from her skinny neck! Why must she decorate herself with it? Why did her eyes shine so madly? Why, oh, why didn’t the poor thing go to bed for two or three days—a week—and *rest*?

She was overdoing things horribly! Patricia knew that she had with the other Anglo-Catholics of her party “heard Mass,” as she would have expressed it, in almost every holy site in the country, that the ceremonial of her Church had never been left out of it whenever an opportunity offered for a ceremonial of any description. If she went on like that, heaven help her! She’d certainly collapse.

Patricia felt really sorry for her, she looked so worn-out and thin. And so, because of this and her old friendship for her,

and because, too, this queer little woman was, after all, affording herself and Peter the grace of her chaperonage, as it were, Patricia tried to behave nicely and sympathetically to her. Really tried, and succeeded.

When at last she said: "Do you know, I'm so tired after being shaken almost to pieces on that awful road, that I must rest before supper," Miss Cresswell gazed at her with a surprised expression.

"Tired?" she exclaimed. "Oh, my dear, I never feel tired! I suppose some inward strength sustains me. I've never felt tired since I arrived in this country. One just forgets one's body in Palestine!"

Patricia smiled. Alas, for her own human frailty, or human dominance.

"You've forgotten yours, I can see," she said. "And if you don't *feel* tired, you *look* it. You look simply exhausted. Do take a good rest now, yourself. Please do!"

Miss Cresswell shook her head. "Such waste, my dear. Such waste of time—in Galilee!"

"Well, well!" Patricia ran quickly up the garden stairs to her bedroom. "Don't let your waste of your body end in wasting your time with a breakdown later on. Our 'poor brother the ass,' as St. Francis called his body, has a nasty little way of revenging itself, you see if it hasn't!"

She had a pleasant little rest, and she and Peter did not meet again until they were seated at the evening meal, a meagre repast, but apparently more than sufficient for Miss Cresswell's appetite. That ardent pilgrim seemed quite oblivious of the fact that she was eating fish—Galilean fish—which consisted of more bones than flesh. The more carnally-minded Patricia comforted Peter with a whispered assurance that she had a good store of plain biscuits and potted meat and Bantam coffee in her room. "We'll supplement this meal later on," she said, laughing. "Material young beasts, aren't we, Simon? Hungering after the flesh-pots of Egypt!"

Peter sought her hand and found it under the shelter of the table. He gave it a grateful squeeze.

"After all," he protested, "I don't see why we shouldn't be hungry. And if this was the sort of fish that the Apostles were catching when they left their nets to become Fishers of Men, they didn't give up as much as I've always imagined!"

Patricia laughed. "But the place itself is charming," she said. "So quiet and green and peaceful. I was rather dreading a German sort of house filled with German people making German noises!"

"Yes," Peter agreed, "it's quite all right. Just what it should be. . . . But all the same—it's a quaint assortment of humanity, this Hospice crowd, isn't it?"

"Ah, now you're seeing them!" Patricia told him. "Only—we've no mid-European pilgrims here, no very odd nationalities. They're mostly Western cranks, I think."

Probably not more than fourteen people were seated at the table. Peter took them all to be religious devotees, but there he was vastly mistaken. The young man seated next to him, for instance, was the very noted young excavator whose latest find, the head of a pre-historic man, had placed him in the forefront of his profession. Photographs and postcards of the head were on sale in the Hospice. Locally it was considered a thrilling find, and it certainly was more interesting to the young man himself than would have been the discovery of the authentic head of St. Peter—a mere modern, of course! His mind was entirely engrossed with the physical evolution of man, not in the least interested in his spiritual ascent. Peter had yet to discover that to this young searcher after the missing link the finding of a flattened thigh-bone of a woman of the Bronze Age, or the left shin-bone of a male flattened with well-marked squatter's facets, showing that his ancestors for many generations had spent much of their time in a semi-erect position, would have interested and delighted him much more than any find in Capernaum throwing further light upon the Gospels, or anything else relating to so late a period in the existence of man.

He scarcely gave ear to the discussion going on between a Presbyterian clergyman and a monk from one of the two Carmelite monasteries on Mount Carmel, who had been reading aloud to the Scotsman an extract from the latest work of Dr. Robert Eisler of the Austrian Historical Institute in Vienna, in which the writer had quoted Josephus' description of the physical appearance of Jesus.

Dr. Eisler had found this description chiefly in the Epistle of Lentulus who, in his turn, took it from the translation of Andrew of Crete and of Vincent de Beauvais, who found it in the mutilated Russian version of Josephus' "Wars of the Jews."

"He has described Christ"—the monk read—"as a man of middle size, with a stooping back and a long face, a prominent nose, and brows that grew together, so that those who saw him would get frightened; with very little hair, and that parted in the middle of the head, according to the custom of the Nazarenes, who were not allowed to cut their hair, and therefore tried to master it in this way.

"His appearance was simple, only his pose was more than human, because he performed wonders through some invisible power. Considering, however, his quite ordinary nature, I, for one, shall not call him an angel ; his name is Jesus and he is nicknamed the Messiah. By the Gentiles he was believed to be a soothsayer, and some of our people said of him that he was our first law-giver, Moses, who had risen from the dead and was showing forth many cures and acts. Others said he was the Envoy of God. But he opposed himself to many things of the law. He did not observe the Sabbath according to our ancient law ; not that he did anything shameful or criminal himself, but through his words he instigated everything, and many from our folk followed him and accepted his teachings, and many became wavering, believing the Jewish tribes would cut themselves free from the hands of the Romans. . . ."

Peter, as well as Patricia, had been listening intently to the reading. Miss Cresswell had risen from the table and left the room silently, in extreme agitation. Suddenly a tall, thin woman, who looked as if she had existed for many months on a diet of Galilean fish, rose from her chair and burst out into a violent protest.

"Of course Josephus, being a Jew, would describe Our Lord like that !" she said. "Who would pay the least attention to what *he* said about Him ? Why should *he* be supposed to know ? Who cares for his opinion ? "

Father Elias looked at the spare owner of the excited voice with kindly, pitying eyes.

"My dear lady," he said, "scholars care. Anyone cares who is not afraid of the truth. Why are you so jealous about the physical appearance of your Saviour ? If He was a plain man and not a beautiful one, as we like to suppose, does it not, perhaps, show still more His amazing spiritual influence ? And there is another interest for scholars in this new find of Dr. Eisler, which lies in the fact that in our version, if I may use the expression, of Josephus' 'Jewish War' there is no mention of Jesus at all, which would lead us to suppose that he did not consider Him or His work of sufficient importance to deserve notice in his *opus magnum*. The only reference to Jesus in the whole book, and that a very brief one, is well known by scholars to be an interpolation. It is not written in the Hebrew of Josephus' date, and was obviously inserted at a much later period."

He paused, and turning to his Presbyterian neighbour, added :

"Dr. Eisler is endeavouring to show that Josephus did

mention Jesus, that He was of sufficient importance to be alluded to, but that what he may have written about Him was intentionally omitted by the Christian translators, who substituted a short passing reference. It is interesting to note that the description has survived in a mutilated state in the Russian version."¹

"I consider that the Christian translators and the editors were very wise to omit such a malicious and vindictive description!"

The tall lady drew herself up and shot the words at Father Elias. Her excited face was quivering, her nervous hands working painfully.

"Fancy," she went on hysterically, "describing Our Lord as 'frightening'! Haven't we all been singing 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild' ever since we were children? Wasn't He the 'Friend of little children'? Wouldn't they have been frightened of Him if He had looked like that?"

"My dear lady," remonstrated the Carmelite, "pray calm yourself! Will you remember what you yourself have just told us—that Josephus was a Jew, and to a Jew the teachings of Jesus were anything but 'meek and mild'? He called Himself their Messiah. Personally, I must say, I think that considering it was a Jew who wrote that description, it cannot be called either malicious or vindictive. Josephus lived only thirty-seven years after Christ, when many, many people must still have been living who remembered Him, who remembered His trial and condemnation as a criminal, and who sincerely believed Him to have deserved His fate. Try to look dispassionately at the whole matter. See it from their conservative point of view. The Jews were essentially a law-abiding people, a people even more opposed to any New Thought than the bigots of to-day."

He broke off abruptly, and then said, in an apologetic voice: "But please forgive my stupid lack of thought, my bad taste! I should not have allowed myself to discuss such a subject at a public table—but to tell you the truth, I did not know that 'the table' was listening! I was speaking to Dr. Robertson, who is, I am sorry to say, leaving us to-morrow morning. I was afraid I might not see him again. . . . It is a curious thing," he added, turning to Dr. Robertson, "that I have found members of the Scots Churches more tolerant than those of any other Protestant communion." He smiled. "It was not ever thus, doctor, was it?"

¹ From an article by the Rev. George H. Box, D.D.

Dr. Robertson gave him an answering smile of understanding. "Far from it," he said. "But to-day we are less afraid of our faith, of the truth. And as a nation we Scotch are extremely inquisitive and intellectually curious. It has always been so—yes, even in the days of our worst bigotry and intolerance there were minds in which this curiosity and vigorous intellectual inquisitiveness neither slumbered nor slept. They took no part in religious hatreds."

The agitated lady rose from the table. She had taken her ideas on the physical appearance of Jesus from Holman Hunt's "Light of the World." She hated this Viennese doctor—this Boche, as she called him in her heart—who had dared to give the world such a terrible description, to say that the Saviour of mankind had a long nose and a frightening face! Never, oh never would she tolerate such an idea!

As she fluttered out of the room like an angry ostrich, Patricia watched her sympathetically. She understood just a little of what the poor thing was feeling. She knew that her own visualising of the physical Jesus had been very British, absurdly false . . . yet at the same time she clung to it, she didn't wish to substitute an unpleasant personality for the Jesus of her imagination. It was too crushing to lose everything, even the physical ideal she had created for herself!

"Poor dear!" she whispered to Peter. "She's awfully upset, isn't she! . . . But aren't we a queer mixture here? That nice-looking girl at the end of the table is an American. She tells me she is working in Beirut with the Society of Friends—and that big man next to her is looking for shells."

"Looking for shells?" Peter laughed. "Not the shells of your friends the Anglo-Caths?"

"The shell he wants couldn't hang on any black ribbon. It's so tiny that you can scarcely see it. Miss America told me all about it before you came down." Patricia smiled. "It takes a lot of strange folk to make up the Palestine world, Simon. I begin to think you and I aren't strange enough for our surroundings! To this shell-collector Jesus is really of secondary importance in Capernaum."

At that moment there was a general movement. The simple meal was over, and they rose from the table with the others. As they walked arm-in-arm through the orange-scented garden, Patricia sighed and then said:

"It was an interesting discussion, wasn't it?"

"Yes. Amazingly interesting. Everything is interesting here." Peter relapsed into silence, and Patricia continued:

"I rather agreed with what the monk said about it proving

the power of Jesus even more, if He was a plain man, unattractive physically. At first the idea is repellent, but the more you think about it, the more you find in it. He had even that to contend with. His good looks couldn't have influenced His women friends."

Still Peter made no response. The place seemed to hold him. The stars had come out in the cool blue heavens; across the sea the hills showed sublimely mysterious.

"It's hard to accept the idea, of course," Patricia added, "for the pictures and the carvings we know of Him are so different from that." She waited for a word of assent, but none came. Peter seemed lost in some dream of his own.

"Simon—Simon," she pressed his arm more tenderly. "I do so love beauty! If *you* were ugly, had a long nose and a frightening look, if your back stooped—" she paused. "Well, I'm sure I shouldn't want you to love me—I'd hate your kisses!" She paused again, and then said protestingly, "The figure and the face of the Man Jesus Whom I've been picturing on these bare hills and in these queer mud-built villages, has been beautiful physically . . . and yet I suppose He must have been far more like one of those orthodox Jews with their long sidecurls and big noses whom we see in Jerusalem to-day, those people who have never changed in creed or in customs since His day. . . . I don't want to think so. I feel sorry for the angry Anglo-Cath. woman. All the same, isn't it better to face the truth? Even if He *did* only take upon Himself the form of man, is it likely that, being a Jew, He would not have been true to the Jewish type? Would He have stooped to using the appeal of physical beauty? St. Paul was physically unattractive, and yet look at the appeal he has made to mankind."

Patricia's slow footsteps halted. Peter bent his star-gazing head and kissed her raised lips, but this garden kiss in Galilee was colder, less charged with passion. Patricia felt the touch of aloofness. It was the affectionate kind of kiss the old Peter of their friendship days might have given her. A kiss that calmed rather than burned.

"What's the matter, Simon?"

"Nothing," said Peter. He held her very closely, assertively closely, but even so she was aware of his real distance; the contact of their bodies brought him no nearer. He might have hugged her even more closely, and she wouldn't have felt him—nothing of him that mattered, anyway.

She pulled herself away.

"What have I done, Pat?"

"Done? You've left me!" she said, a little brokenly. "You aren't here, Simon. You—you don't need me!" She

faced round on him, and her voice dropped. "I don't think you've been with me all evening. Are you going to change as well as everything else?"

"We're in Galilee, Pat."

"I know we are."

"Do you," he hesitated, "do you feel you are here . . . that . . ." He stopped. "That you are quite conscious of"—he stopped; tried again—"I don't know how to express it . . . of—your objective self?"

"Yes, I feel more conscious of myself here than ever I did in Jerusalem . . . it's all so much more what I expected it to be." She paused. "It isn't so destructive. Jesus is more present, more the dominating spirit; it's possible to find Him again in Galilee."

They stood for a moment on the terrace outside her bedroom door; they had climbed the stone stairs together slowly.

"Certainly the character of the place is singularly unlike Jerusalem," Peter said.

Patricia opened her door, then turned to him and said:

"Good-night, Simon. Do you remember saying once that our beliefs were perhaps fundamentally more alike than I imagined? I didn't think so then, but now I begin to think you were right. It all depends on what individuals make of God, of what we make of His Holy Spirit. You see, here"—she threw out her arm towards the lake—"here it's so much easier to take Him as the Son of Man; and isn't it strange to think that in that ruined village at the end of the lake He used to saw wood and probably make useful household things—that He must have been a working artizan before He was baptised by John in the Jordan?"

Peter's eyes were on the still lake while Patricia was speaking. God's own stars were lighting it up, making it a silvery sheet of beauty; God's own breath seemed to steal up from the night-flowers in the garden.

He looked at the mother-building of the Hospice, a modest low house, surrounded by oleanders and shrubs. What a strange mixture of human beings, what a strange variety of interests it housed! The world in miniature.

"Good-night, Pat." Peter kissed her.

"Good-night, Peter." She looked at him critically. "You're tired, old thing! Go to bed—we shall have a long day to-morrow."

They had arranged to take a boat and go to Capernaum the next morning, and, as their host expressed it, "spend the day there."

"Yes, I think I'm tired," Peter said. "We see so much and we think so much, don't we?" He smiled. "There isn't so much to see as to feel, is there?"

He was certainly tired, but when Patricia's door closed gently on him Peter did not go at once to his own room. Instead, he stood with folded arms, gazing at the scene before him—one of the most entralling scenes in Palestine.

"Galilee of the Galilean!" he said aloud. In Jerusalem it was Mohammed who "possessed" the Holy City, just as it was Rameses who possessed Thebes, and Socrates who dominated Athens. But, as a humble disciple of the truth-loving old Greek, Peter was obliged to own that no one of the three—nor any other heroic figure down all the ages—was so intensely, and actively, alive in the places so intimately connected with their stories, as was Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth, in Galilee to-day.

Yet, strongly as he had felt the spirit of Socrates in Athens, clearly as he had seen the queer figure of the ancient stonecutter, surrounded by the finest efforts of his art, Peter had to admit that in this secluded spot, on the shores of the lake so frequented in life by Jesus and His dearest friends, the unlettered mind of the Galilean was more compelling, more living than the mind of that immortal Greek philosopher. In Galilee He was the Wanderer on every hillside, in every secluded valley, and on every barren waste. Yet after all was it not St. Paul who had made the greatness of Jesus? Given His name immortality? He had heard the argument that St. Paul was greater than Jesus.

Peter walked on to his own room. It was later than he had thought. He must get some business letters written and then get to bed. But how oddly practical things fitted into the picture—with Galilee!

As he opened the door, suddenly his senses dealt with Patricia. In just such another little room she was making ready for bed—was by now, perhaps, in bed. . . . How strange to think that in a few months' time he would be sharing with her the intimacy of her room, that so soon he would be privileged to gaze upon her beauty softened by the abandonment of sleep! His imagination conjured up the exquisite promises of the future—yet scarcely with his objective senses now. These thoughts did not disturb and excite him here as they would have done, as indeed they did in Jerusalem, only the evening before. Somehow, it was different here.

Still his thoughts dealt with Patricia. . . . She had changed. His objective mind picked up that fact, wirelessed from his subconscious. And this change was not entirely due to her altered religious outlook. It was not because she now realised that there

could be good Christians outside the Anglo-Catholic fold. Of that he was positive. There had always been two *Patricias*. The change he sensed belonged to the other, not the "churchian" one. . . . And it left him guessing.

His thoughts were broken in upon unexpectedly, for he had scarcely closed his door when a clear call, a prolonged cry, shattering the stillness with dramatic force, caused him to open it again.

It was the Moslems' midnight call to prayer—a work of supererogation for the super-devout—being flung across the starlit waters of the Christian Sea of Galilee from the minaret of a mosque in Tiberias, like a challenge to the Carpenter's claim to Godhead from the very home of Jesus.

"There is no Deity but God. He hath no companion. To Him belongeth the dominion, and to Him belongeth praise. He giveth life and causeth death, and He is living and shall never die. . . . O Thou Bountiful One! O Lord!"

Peter listened, with acute appreciation of the ringing, sonorous voice, whose message he had so often heard, in Cairo and elsewhere, and so often read in text-books on the East.

The voice ceased, but the cadence of the chant hung in the air, then slowly floated, like some sweet-sounding organ-roll, over the tops of the night-purple Galilean hills. What would Jesus have thought of it, if He had heard it, Peter wondered . . . what would He have answered in the stillness of the night? . . .

When the garden and the hills and the low sea were silent once more, Peter went into his room again, and closed the door. . . . He must shut out Galilee! There were practical things to be done and he must turn in early . . . and not so early either, after all!

CHAPTER XV

PETER had been asleep for a few hours when something awoke him. He listened. . . . Was it Patricia calling his name?

He sat up in bed, his senses alert, his whole being waiting for the call to be repeated. After a few minutes it came again, but it was not Patricia's voice.

Peter's heart began to beat disturbingly. He became keenly apprehensive, concentrated on listening for the sound.

The little room was in thick darkness, except for a glint of starlight which forced its way in through a chink of the closed shutters and struck the wall opposite Peter's bed. A big spider was travelling down the shaft of light, moving very slowly. Peter's unheeding eyes followed it mechanically.

An intense awareness kept his body rigid even while his subconscious mind registered the spider's slow movement, accepted it as proof of his being awake.

The cry he had heard had not been a call from the minaret in Tiberias; it was something closer at hand than that, something more personal; an intimate appeal.

Satisfied that he was really awake, Peter sprang out of bed and crossed to the door, opening it softly. The same stillness of the night which he had shut out met him on the threshold. Not a human being was in sight. The garden lay asleep and soundless, not even a night-bird stirred in the dark foliage of the trees.

Peter went back to bed.

He might have fallen asleep; he didn't know. He thought he had not, but he could never be certain. Anyhow, if he *had* slept, he was again awakened by the same voice calling his name. The same unfamiliar, yet familiar voice.

Again he sat up in bed. He was awake now, he was almost certain, but to make quite sure he would place the chair which stood close to his bedside out in the room, in an awkward position. If in the morning it was where he thought he was putting it, he would know that he had not been dreaming. . . . And what about a cigarette?

His nervous hand reached out for the matches, but halted midway. Again the voice was calling.

"Peter! Peter!"

This time it was urgent, insistent rather than appealing.

"Yes?" he called back. He *had* to speak. "Who wants me?"

There was silence again. He listened with a thumping heart.

Then came the voice—words, strange, unexpected words.

"Jesus wants you. It's Jesus Who is calling you."

"Jesus?"

As Peter uttered the Name a cold sweat spread itself over his body, and his limbs trembled. His heart was choking him.

"Yes, Peter. It is Jesus, your friend. He is here."

The sound ceased, but the small silent room was filled with the fullness of the voice, it was as alive with it as the night garden had been dead with emptiness.

Peter tried to pull himself together, told himself that he must be dreaming. His objective senses assured him that the whole thing was a nightmare, and what seemed to prove the truth of this assertion was that he had no power to get out of bed or to move. He had had nightmares before this, and painful ones too, which he had realised at the time were nightmares. And all the time he was under their spell of terror he had had the same sensation of powerlessness, inability to move, to escape from their clutches. This, then, was just one of his old attacks.

The voice spoke again. It knew his heart.

"No, you are not dreaming, Peter, and you are not mad. . . . You are beginning to come alive for the first time—alive to reality—because you will have Jesus for your friend and your companion. You will know at last what happiness means because you are living and loving. Jesus is the love you have been looking for, Peter, the love the whole world is looking for, the love I tried to give the world, and which it would not receive."

There was silence.

Peter had *not* been looking for Jesus, he had just let things alone. He had never done his best, though he had tried not to do his worst. He wanted to say this, to confess that he had never really wanted Jesus as anything more than an example, an ideal—but his tongue was tied. It was helpless.

"You have never known whom or what you were wanting, Peter. The world never does know what it wants. But the love which will give you happiness is not the love you thought you had got, the human love you asked for."

Peter resented the words. It *was* Patricia's love he wanted. He had never thought about anything higher in the way of love, anything less human! His loyalty to Patricia in his unspoken thoughts was answered immediately.

"You came to Galilee because I was here waiting for you, Peter, I Who am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. That was why you came, Peter."

"Oh! Oh!" Peter spoke at last, bounded from his bed. He must find out if he was dreaming, break this nightmare, waken himself, if it was one. It was becoming too exhausting.

But how was he to prove anything? Reality can never be proved. Belief that we are all living is an act of faith. He felt feeble, helpless, unreal.

He drank a glass of cold water. As he did so, his practical mind remembered that he had promised Patricia never to drink

any unboiled water. Never mind, he'd taken the risk and it had made him feel better.

Of course he had just dreamt it all, he sighed. The voice had just been a part of his dreams.

Hurriedly he dressed himself—his bed did not tempt him, he had no wish to dream again. No voice spoke while he threw on his clothes. The room felt empty and chill, but Peter breathed more freely for its emptiness. The spell was at last broken. He was now fully awake. Before he had been in the semi-conscious state, between sleeping and waking, when the subconscious most readily asserts itself, brings to the surface of the mind the impressions it has secretly registered. And Galilee had been accountable for his dream, the cry from the minaret for that voice, that curious voice. . . . His feeling of material certainty had returned. He had never had anything to do with supernatural cults, nor ever would have. He disliked them.

But how desolate the little room had become, how strangely remote from human existence !

He put on his thick overcoat, and buttoned the small neck-strap which kept the collar up about his ears, for the air was awfully chilly, the world deadly empty . . . and in his dream it had been so full, so quickened with the presence of that voice.

Opening the door, he walked quietly along the balcony and down the little stair into the garden—that garden of sleep—and so on, down to the pebbly shore of the lake. As he reached it, the first hint of the coming dawn was beginning to change the colour of the heavens—just beginning, nothing more. Their soft purple was less intense, their stars less light-giving and resplendent. The eastern night had exhausted itself ; its passion had no longer the abandonment of youth.

As Peter walked along the shore, disturbing its stillness by the crunching of pebbles under his strong boots, the noise he was making jarred on his senses. What right had he to disturb the quiet of the place ?

He thought the line of the hills round the lake looked grander than it had done in the daylight ; the mountains were mountains now, not mere hills, which sheltered a sublime mystery in their folds.

Suddenly Peter stopped and turned sharply. He was being followed ! He felt the presence of someone quite close to him. Yet he had heard no sound, no crunching of footsteps over the pebbles ! Then he remembered that natives make no noise, that most of them go barefoot. It was some fisherman, he supposed. But he could see no one.

As he turned round again to continue his walk, he felt a hand laid firmly on his shoulder, and started. The place was extremely desolate, remote from any human habitation. It would be a nasty experience to be attacked here. He tried to shake off the hand, to quicken his pace back to the garden, but it was useless.

Then he heard a voice close beside him: "Don't be afraid, Peter. It is Jesus. He is beside you."

But Peter was afraid, very greatly afraid. He trembled.

"Did Jesus ever hurt anyone, Peter? Was He ever a man you need be afraid of meeting in the dark?"

Peter realised the truth of the words, but he could not make himself speak. The natural man in him was shrinking from the supernatural presence.

"Why are you so afraid, Peter?" the voice went on, with gentle persistence. "Have I ever harmed you? Listen, and I will tell you why you are afraid—why you are afraid of Jesus. When you were a little child, Peter, people told you things about Me which you as a little child could not understand, and these things have never left you. But now, Peter, that you are a man, won't you put away childish fears? Won't you try to know Me as I am? Let Me be your friend. Let Me help you to walk in the way of light! The way of Life!"

"Yes, yes!" Peter whispered the two words inaudibly. He was trembling, ashamed, bewildered.

"It was here, close to this shore and by this lake, that I lived when I was a hard-working carpenter. My happiest days were spent here, near all My dear friends, and so it is to Galilee that I love to return."

"But I cannot see you," Peter protested. "I can only hear your voice."

"Have patience, Peter. When I know that you love Me you will see Me, but I am close beside you."

As the words were spoken, Peter stretched out his hand. . . . No, there was nothing! His arm dropped back, dejectedly. His fear was leaving him, his doubts also were fading. Unquestioningly, and as yet only subconsciously, not with any of his objective senses, he was accepting the divinity of the Unseen Presence. Subconsciously, he was becoming aware that no reasoning, nor any persuading of any mortal mind, can make a man accept Jesus as his Divine Lord, know Him as the Son of Man, born of a woman, and yet the Very Son of God. He was sensing conversion, the entering of the Holy Spirit into man's consciousness. The gift of the Holy Spirit, the descent of the Holy Ghost,

But trembling Peter did not as yet know these things. His objective self was still too greatly taken up with wonder and amazement, perhaps still with fear, fear for his own reality, his own sanity.

"You thought, Peter, that you were coming to this My country to study My teaching and to follow out the story of My life on earth on the actual spot. You were prepared to study it critically, as you studied the history of Egypt and of Athens. And also you hoped that here you were going to meet and enjoy the love of the woman your material body desires. That was what you thought, Peter!"

"Yes!" Peter said the word decisively. Yes, that was what he had thought. But now he knew that, for some reason which he could not understand, he was undergoing a strange experience, so strange, indeed, that he felt no longer sure of himself or of his past intentions. Might they not have been carried out for the fulfilment of a greater purpose?

Suddenly and unaccountably he ceased to struggle against the experience, or to question its motive. He gave himself up wholly and unreservedly to reception.

There had been silence. Suddenly the voice spoke again.

"You came to Palestine, to this quiet spot on the shore of My lake to meet Me. I made you come. I formed all your plans for you, because I need you, Peter. I love you. It is for Me you must work, Peter. There is so much for you to do, so much waiting to be done. . . . My work will make you happy."

"Me! Me?" Peter spoke haltingly, wonderingly. "Jesus needs me?"

"Yes, I have need of you, Peter, to minister to Me in the person of poor suffering humanity. My need of you is great, and the time has come when you must help and serve Me through humanity. Humanity requires you, it needs your health and your brains and your love. Yes—Jesus needs all of you, Peter, because the suffering of humanity is so great. The cry of the children, terrible as it is, is the cry of your crucified Saviour. Christ is humanity. Humanity is Christ."

Peter sank on to the ground. His head meekly bowed itself on his breast, his hands instinctively clasped themselves in prayer—and Peter had not prayed for many years, had almost forgotten how to pray.

A hand was placed tenderly on his head. Its pressure made him say, "Lord, teach me how to pray!"

He had just breathed the words, he could not speak them, and then he waited. At first there was no sound, and then he heard the familiar words of the Lord's Prayer.

"Our Father Who art in Heaven—hallowed be Thy Name—Thy Kingdom come—"

When the last syllable had died away, Peter was still kneeling. The Spirit of God was filling him. . . . One of those strange spiritual experiences had come to him which change the direction of a man's soul. . . .

When at last he rose from his knees, the dawn was becoming pronounced. Daylight was breaking, like a gradually broadening ribbon of light above the dark hills which bounded the lake. But the stillness was the stillness of mystery. There is always that cold sense of awe in the hour which lies between dawn and day, and by the Apostles' lake it was infinitely mysterious. Peter walked on along the shore, softly and reverently, as a man walks on holy ground, while a faint breeze from the other end of the lake came refreshingly to his fevered senses, travelling like a spirit over the surface of the waters. . . . All Galilee was Jesus. The material world seemed to have melted.

Peter walked on, with bowed head, and ears strained attentively, but now no voice broke the stillness, his name was not called. He was alone, alone with his new soul.

For long he continued to walk automatically, his instinct for self-preservation alone helping him to avoid pitfalls. Then, suddenly, and still quite automatically, he turned and retraced his steps, for the dawn had given place to daylight ; the sun was beginning to rise. By the time he reached the portion of the shore below the Hospice garden, it would be shining over Galilee. The everyday world would be awake.

He stood still. His objective mind was asserting itself. . . . Yes, a new day had begun ! He held his breath. What did it hold ?

Between midnight and sunrise a thousand years of understanding had been revealed to him. He had been given a completely new revelation of the meaning of life, its only meaning. He was not going to question the means by which it had been vouchsafed to him, because he knew that such questioning is useless. It was sufficient for him that it was by the same means as that which bestowed upon Socrates that ineffaceable stamp of divine experience. After his long swoon of the senses he emerged with a knowledge which transformed his life. . . . It was the same spiritual experience which changed the gay young chevalier of Assisi into the world's best loved saint. The same experience which had happened to St. Paul on the road to Damascus.

With the dramatic swiftness of the East, the sun had been rising higher and higher in the heavens, blazing into glory as suddenly as though some unseen hand had switched on the

golden globe. Instantly the still, cool landscape had been transfigured.

Peter kept his back still turned to the Hospice. Not yet! No, not yet! He could not so soon go in and pick up the thread of his daily life, become once more a tourist—"do" Palestine with Patricia!

Patricia. Ah! He had forgotten Patricia, as he had forgotten everything that had ever happened before the voice called to him!

Patricia! . . . What could he tell her? Anything at all, or nothing? No, just nothing! He could not, even with Pat, question or critically discuss the nature of his experience. And yet he was engaged to her, they were to be husband and wife—one flesh and one—he paused. Could they be one spirit, now?

The question gave him furiously to think. Even in her most "churchian" days, would Patricia have understood? Wouldn't she have treated the experience as he himself would have treated it, told him a week ago by some "converted" friend? Smiled a little scornfully at "Saul among the prophets"—"Simon become Peter," Simon converted.

"Converted!" He recoiled from the word. It suggested terrible revivalist meetings, and "evidences" at Salvation Army services. And yet, a deep consciousness told him that, hateful as the word had become through a vulgarised use, it did mean just what had happened to him, and what had happened to St. Paul on that white Syrian road. . . .

Somehow the recollection of St. Paul's conversion helped him. It was so awfully sudden, so apparently unmerited. Saul, that hard persecutor of Christians, that ardent hater of Jesus—well, he hadn't desired to believe, hadn't asked for the gift of faith, but suddenly Jesus had spoken to him on that road to Damascus, and Saul had believed, had become "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ."

Peter turned his eyes to the hills—from whence all down the ages men have been wont to lift their eyes for help. The purity and stillness of these Galilean hills rested Peter, filled his heart with courage.

It did not matter what Pat might call it, what anyone called it—it was a confidence between himself and God; too sacred and too inexplicable to be confided to others, too wholly belonging to the spirit to be put under the cold searchlight of scientific scrutiny, or the warmer glow of friendly discussion. What is wholly understandable to a man's soul, to his spiritual being, is not in any way explicable to his material self, for no words have yet been coined in any mint of language to express the

things of the spirit. Peter knew that he had experienced what only he himself could believe and understand—and greatly he hoped he would never be tempted to profane this spiritual confidence by discussing it with other people to whom it would not be sacred.

It will be plain to the reader that by this time Peter had ceased to doubt, that he had accepted the experience as a spiritual communion with Jesus. Jesus had spoken to him. Not the Nazarene, the Man Jesus whom he had admired, as he admired Socrates, but Jesus the Son of God. And even if He had spoken to him through Peter's own voice, if it was Peter's vivid imagination which had heard that voice, it was none the less divine. That was Jesus' chosen method. What is imagination? For what is it given us?

Peter not only believed that Jesus of Galilee had spoken to him, but that He was the Very Son of God, the Crucified Saviour of mankind. He not only believed, but he was emptied of all his unbelief. He was filled with the consciousness of divinity. The miracle of conversion was complete.

Subconsciously this had happened as yet, not consciously. The ghost which had held the air of Galilee was the Divine Spirit of Jesus; that mind which, for Peter, had filled the countryside with an atmosphere of the Spirit, was the gracious thought of Jesus. Galilee is as full of the perfume of Jesus as a garden is full of the scent of flowers.

He still stood looking at the sea, not yet daring to go back to the everyday life of the world.

He repeated the words, "Peter, I have need of you . . . there is work for you to do." He tried to scorn the idea, to repudiate it, but he could not, it was beyond his power. His scorn turned into a quickening of his forces, a vivifying of his energies. It also ended in fear. The idea would not be put aside. It was stronger than himself.

But how was he to obey the voice? Viewing the matter practically, it would seem absurd—absurd—to change his whole manner of living because a voice at dawn—probably his own voice—had said that he was to serve Jesus by serving humanity. There was surely something in the Bible about "How can you love Me Whom ye have not seen, if you love not your brother whom ye have seen?" Old Father Tommasso had quoted the very words to him! . . . His brother—Humanity at large. Yes, his brothers were the men and women he could see every day of his life, if he did not keep his eyes turned away from them. A struggling and suffering humanity.

"I am Humanity; serve Humanity, and you will serve

Me. . . ." Peter shivered. It had once been so easy just to hear these things, just to admire the teachings and the character of the Great Master, that Maker of "sweet words," that super-revolutionary, that King amongst Reformers. All that had been so easy; but to love Him through all mankind was quite another story. To love the starving and the helpless might not be so difficult, for pity is akin to love; but to love all the ugly and beastly new-rich, to love your spiteful enemies, to love what Peter despised most of all, the cocksure, narrow-minded, sheltered classes! His material entity said: "You'll never do it! Chuck this as nonsense!" But the still small voice whispered: "Try understanding these brothers of yours a little better. Try putting yourself in their places, and perhaps you will find that you hate them a little less. Give yourself their surroundings, their unawakenedness, their retarded evolution, and perhaps you will find that instead of hating and despising these less fortunate brothers, you will despise yourself. Neglect, Peter, is worse than ignorance."

Peter's head bowed itself in submission. As yet he did not know how he could help them, but he knew that he had received the command, and he must obey.

He must have done with his selfish, self-centred way of living. The world was full of people who needed help, and so far he had never helped anyone, never given any of his energies, brains, or time to the Cause of Humanity. He had lived just as much for his own material satisfaction as the beasts of the field. "If I were killed like an ox," he said grimly, aloud, "I wouldn't even make good eating for hard-working humanity! The beasts of the field are of more good than I am."

He swung round quickly and turned his back on the hills and the sea. He had walked at dawn on its shore, with Jesus, the Son of God; he knew he had. He knew that he could never convince himself to the contrary. Yet, if he told any educated man or woman his experience, said that he wanted to serve that Voice which had spoken, to devote his life to Humanity, which is Christ, they would say he was mad, suffering from delusions. The very people who believed most sincerely in St. Paul's sudden conversion, and in the conversion of St. Francis of Assisi, would laugh at the story he had to tell them.

Now he realised something of the enormous difficulty which everywhere confronted Jesus. Peter saw how He would be ridiculed and scoffed at if He came again to-day. And far, far uglier would be the sneers and the scoffing of the people who had professed to believe in Him for nineteen hundred years, than the buffeting and the crucifying of His flesh by those to whom His

startling teachings came with appalling hideousness as the unpardonable sin of blasphemy. They, indeed, must be excused and forgiven, for "they knew not what they did."

But he must get back into the practical world, put the experience aside, give it into the charge of his subconscious mind for the present, or Patricia would say he was "dotty." Probably all the Apostles were considered "dotty"! Religious fanaticism, he knew, was extremely catching, and Jesus had begun His teachings at a strangely opportune moment, at one of those recurrent occasions when the Jewish world was strung up to a great pitch of expectancy of the coming of the Messiah. He had been looked for for thousands of years, looked for and prayed for. The orthodox believers were becoming apprehensive, the world was alive with hope. Under the circumstances, it was no new thing for false prophets to rise up in the desert, religious fanatics, so common in the country to this day, and declare themselves to be the Christ. And this was just what Jesus was in the eyes of the educated Jews. But to their surprise this latest Prophet, Who was called the Nazarene, was successful. He had many followers, and that to the Jews made Him worth thinking about, because His doctrines were appallingly strange and dangerous, His politics were in their eyes an abomination.

Peter tried to put back the surging waves of thought which monopolised him. He made a fine effort to connect his mind with the affairs of the day, to think about the proposed expedition with Patricia. He collected his wandering thoughts. . . . Where was it that they were going? What had they arranged?

He climbed the difficult ascent from the shore to the Hostel. It was unstable footing. He had to go slowly, choose each step, for the ground slipped under his feet. As he went he said to himself: "One step enough for me."

The words came up from the well of old thoughts that lay stored in his subconsciousness. "Lead Thou me on." Well —yes, wasn't the path like what his life was going to be? An upward struggle, and a constant slipping back! Newman's verses, which he had sung so carelessly in his school chapel, had come back to him like bread cast upon the waters. Their personal appeal made them infinitely tender. . . . Ah, Peter! that film-screen of the soul, what a picture-house it is, what a dramatic, illustrated human document!

Yes, he had left his own familiar world at dawn, and it was now less than two hours after sunrise. He had spent only that short time in his new world, so of course he must go slowly, one step must be enough for him at a time. And in this new world there was the old world too; there was no keeping them

apart. The old world would soon be materialising and monopolising every portion of his life. There was Patricia in it, and his dear human love for her, and Patricia's need of him. Yes, Pat needed him. She needed his tenderest and most generous love because she had lost her Church, and in losing her Church she had lost her Saviour—because her Saviour had been made for her by her Church. . . . Oh, there was an infinity of things in his old world which would make walking in it very, very difficult, but one step must be enough for him. He had only just discovered the way of Light, he couldn't expect to go bounding confidently along in it. Like the spider on the wall, he must follow the narrow path and not attempt to leave it.

When he reached the garden he met one of the Brothers of St. Vincent and St. Paul, carrying a spade in his hand. He had been, so he said, "stealing a march on the sun," working while the day was yet cool. His air of detachment and content made Peter feel happier.

He hurried to his bedroom. When he opened the door and saw a chair standing almost in the middle of the small room, he stared at it and then smiled. It seemed such years ago since he had put it there; and how significantly it belonged to his old world, how vividly it expressed to him the difficulties he would be up against in the new.

He placed it beside his bed in its usual position.

"It is less than a couple of hours since I said that if it stuck out in the middle of the room when I got up in the morning I should know whether I was dreaming or not!"

Well, he knew now that he hadn't been dreaming, whatever else he had been doing—but it was up to him now to be practical for the present. . . .

And thereupon Peter gave himself up to practicalities. He took his "sparrow-splash," as he called it, in his rubber bath; he shaved with more than usual nicety, and gave a good pounding with his two brushes to his gleaming hair. To do honour to Pat, and to the glorious day, he put on a clean suit of grey flannels, an exclusively well-built suit.

Doing these things helped him, they bridged over the gulf between his walk on the Galilean shore and his meeting with the outer world. It placed the coming days in the foreground and distanced the experience he had passed through.

When he was dressed he looked spick and span, an extremely well-turned-out young man, not at all the sort you would suspect of having heard voices or of having knelt on the seashore at dawn, of having been "converted."

CHAPTER XVI

WHEN Peter arrived at the breakfast-room, Patricia's pale face and smiling eyes met his with a flash of welcome. She had been waiting for him.

Her own pure pallor and her primrose-coloured gown suggested to his senses a bouquet of spring flowers—English flowers—

"Daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."

It was just like Pat, he thought, to have chosen such a delicious gown, just like her, too, to know what a sense of spring coolness it would bring into the stuffy air of Tiberias. Darling Pat!

Peter sat down beside her, their hands met under the cloth. Patricia was feeling delightfully alive and eager. She had slept long and soundly, and so she gave Peter's hand a caressing squeeze. Her deeply shadowed eyes were, at the moment, like the Galilean hills with the lingering night still on them; their passion and their beauty looked into his for sympathy and understanding of her youthful need for expressing the wants that haunted her beauty. If she could have expressed herself plainly, she would have said: "Peter, I want to hug someone because I am so alive. I can't bear it all by myself, I must share my livingness with someone else!" But being, let us hope, the "perfect lady," she refrained. The table-cloth screened the hand of her lover which she had squeezed pretty helpfully. The Hospice saw nothing.

And Peter? Well, he did his best. A detached, and to Patricia, a disappointing best. Her pretty new gown and her "come-hither" smile had been wasted. She almost withdrew her hand. He was, she supposed, hungry. "Feed the beast before you kiss him!" Well, even Peter was as other men were, not very satisfying to others if his own stomach was empty. Even the nicest men are at their nicest when best fed.

But Peter was not hungry, in spite of his supper off Galilean fish and his early rising. Not hungry enough to excuse him for not being just nice. In her particular mood of the moment,

Patricia wanted him to be glad that they were lovers, human lovers, and that a garden made for lovers awaited them.

Peter was conscious of her displeasure. What an unreliable creature man is; he can neither feel sure of himself nor of anyone else. He felt that Patricia was justified . . . and yet he could not help himself, for a lover's passion and a lover's desire cannot be called up at will. They come, even to lovers, as suddenly and unexpectedly as do all inward and invisible things—things of the spirit.

"Where have you been?" Patricia asked. She felt, without his telling her, that this was not his first appearance. He had already been out and abroad.

"Been?" Peter started, and began to speak, halted, tried again, and then merely echoed her words. "Where have I been?"

. . . He must pull himself together! But how could he tell her where he had been, how far his short walk had taken him—how far from her he did not know at the time.

"I went down on the seashore," he said awkwardly. "I took a walk."

"Oh!" Patricia said impulsively, then added slowly: "If you had waked me I would have come with you. It must have been lovely and cool. It's getting stuffy already."

Peter tried to respond sympathetically. "Yes, it was beautifully cool, but I started out too early for you, long before daylight. I saw the dawn break over the hills."

"Didn't you sleep? Poor Simon! After our long drive yesterday, I slept like a top."

"Yes, I slept very soundly at first."

As he spoke, the beauty of the voice that had suddenly waked him floated through Peter's senses, just as the voice from the minaret had floated across the lake and through the sleeping stillness of the night. He became lost in it. . . . But he must rouse himself and talk, be sensible in Patricia's eyes. He was astoundingly sensible in his own way, sensible of the things that mattered. He sensed them as he had never sensed them before. But that was not enough. He was Patricia's lover—Patricia's lover! Didn't that way of expressing it alone show the distance his feet had carried him between the dawn and the daylight? Now he had become Patricia's accepted lover, and he owed her a lover's duty. He was not the lover of Patricia who hung on her every promise of a greater love for himself.

If he told her Who had waked him so early, what would be her answer? She would say he had been dreaming, that the voice was a dream voice. Well, so it might have been. He

wasn't going to question it. If God had chosen to speak to him in a dream, why not? His voice had spoken to St. Paul in the blinding light of a Syrian day; why not to him, Peter Armitage, in the Galilean dawn? But Patricia would not understand that; he wouldn't have understood it himself, two days ago.

He looked at the girl. What was going to happen between them? Could they ever be the same to each other if he did not tell her? And would she ever be the same to him if he did?

For in spite of her emotional nature, or, to express it more correctly, her passionate one, there was a distinct vein of the materialistic and practical among the ingredients which made up her dear personality. Caught young and kept, Pat would have made a fine nun, emotionally earnest and devout; but let loose in the world with money, youth and beauty, and a generous appreciation of give and take—who could say? It is the sheltered who are safe from this world's dangers, but will they find grace in the next?

Even so soon Peter had asked himself what was going to happen between them. Patricia was going to be his wife, their lives would be spent in each other's company, and yet he knew that they were far apart, that the things which would matter to him now were not the things that would matter to her. The sudden sense of human loneliness which had faced him in Egypt stared at him again. He saw man's loneliness as he had not seen it before.

Patricia turned to her guide-book. She would let him eat in peace. A man either wanted a woman or he didn't. He could never dissemble. At the moment Peter had evidently no need of her conversation.

And Peter? Well, his food was hard to swallow. Argument came and went in his mind. . . . Hadn't Pat told him that it seemed to her she had come to Palestine to lose her faith in the Divinity of Christ? And didn't the Christian Church depend upon belief in that Divinity? Was it not its sublime article of faith, the distinguishing note of all professing Christians? That was what Patricia had believed in and lost. She had lost more than the "churchian" faith he had had so little patience with, she had lost the Divinity of Christ.

Pat was now in the position he had been in. She was accepting Jesus as a moralist, a philosopher, still holding to His teachings as the highest and the best; but if her Church depended upon the actual divinity of Jesus, she was no longer, in the eyes of her Church, a Christian.

Peter was conscious that they would have been able to draw

much closer together if that spiritual experience at dawn had never happened, but it had happened—and so indisputably, that there was no possible means of forgetting it.

And attached to that indisputable fact was a curious, and as yet wholly subconscious, sense of regret that Patricia's "churchian" faith had slipped, like a worn-out mantle, from her lovely shoulders. Now, to Peter's eyes, it had left her naked, exposed to the cold winds of uncomforted humanity. He himself had been no churchman in the past, but even then, although conscious of the harm done to the Name of Jesus in the eyes of men of other religions, by the Church which professed to serve Him, he had been just enough to admit that that Church had kept His name alive for all mankind through many centuries; and for that he could now feel deeply grateful, could forgive much. Yes, the Church had dragged itself through the mud, but it had also lifted itself high out of it again. Bigotry and intolerance and cruel persecution, now on one side, now on the other, among Christians, had crucified the Saviour again a thousand times, but these were the sins of ignorance and zeal, of "holy hate." Like the Jews of old, "they knew not what they did."

As he sat there, eating his bread and honey, it was significant of his new condition that the pictures which screened themselves before Peter's mind were scenes out of the New Testament which dealt with the supernatural Jesus, not with the revolutionary philosopher and teacher from Nazareth. Nothing was deleted now. The Book in its entirety was the Chart of the Way, the Truth and the Life.

"Have you been in the company of Apostolic Peter, walking with ghosts?"

Patricia's voice broke in jarringly upon his thoughts. She had read all she cared to read just then of the guide-book, more than she would remember. She laughed a little mirthlessly as she spoke. What was this new sense of distance which had risen up between them? It might very well be she who was the eager one, not Peter. It was so unlike Peter to be moody, and he was moody. Her practical, light-hearted Peter, where was he?

"Tell me, did you meet Peter and Andrew, and were they mending their nets?" Her flippant question was followed by a quick sigh, as she continued: "I didn't, and I went out on the balcony at about eleven o'clock last night, and looked and looked up and down over the sea and far away. It was so uncannily still and deserted that I felt it surely was a case of now or never. That if I were ever to see a spirit from the other world on this earth I should see it here. If the will to see and receive makes it possible for us to see and to receive, I really was willing, Peter.

It would have interested me so enormously that I don't think I could have been afraid. It is the unexpected that unnerves us, and I really expected someone or something—didn't you?"

The word "interested" bruised Peter's exposed nerves. "*It would have interested me so enormously that I don't think I could have been afraid*" . . . No, he could never tell her. Those words expressed Pat's—his own beloved Pat's—attitude towards his experience.

She had stopped, expecting his answer. He must say something, however banal.

"And didn't you, old girl, didn't you receive anything?"

"No, nothing, either physical or spiritual. Nothing even from my own imagination. To me the place seemed uncannily dead. No graveyard at night could have been deader—or more ghostly . . . and yet . . . well, I saw no ghosts. My fault, I suppose. But I wasn't sorry to get back into my comfy bed, where I felt so human and cosy and—earthy. And I'm of the earth earthy, I suppose, and not one bit psychic."

Peter had listened intently. To Patricia the whole place had been as dead as a graveyard, too ghostly even for ghosts. To him it had . . . but his objective mind could not explain what it had given him, what living thing had filled it for him. His attempt to speak crumbled into powder. He felt helpless.

After breakfast Patricia said: "Well, do you feel like starting pretty soon? The day won't get cooler."

"All right, if you want to." Peter's eyes wandered. How could he keep himself from wandering, how could he tie himself to the present? "Where to, darling?" he said apologetically.

"Why, Capernaum, of course! Don't you even remember our plans? We are to do the synagogue that's being excavated there. But really, Simon, you are the limit! You seem only half awake." She looked at him critically. "Are you sure you're quite well? You seem only half here!"

Only half here! Had she known it, she was perfectly right. His natural body had been trying to function, to swallow stale toast and tasteless tea. It had been hearing the practical hens of the Galilean Hospice loudly announcing their satisfactory production of contributions to the larder of St. Vincent and St. Paul. It had been listening to Patricia's rather disappointed voice, while his other self, his rapidly awakening one, was everywhere and anywhere, so it seemed to him, but with his natural body.

"Pat, dearest," he spoke tenderly, "I'm quite all right, perfectly well, but—don't you find it rather difficult to hold on to yourself here? It's all so"—he hesitated—"it's so

amazingly new and yet so old. I find it more exacting than Egypt."

He looked at her for understanding. Words were so utterly futile, 'their eyes and their senses only must speak to each other. He sighed. "It's pretty exhausting too—" Again he paused, searching carefully for the words he found so difficult. "For I'm learning, dearest, as you yourself told me I should, what effect it has on people."

"Oh," Patricia said, "that was Jerusalem. I find this place different. It's less devastating. To me it is charming. The whole of Galilee seems to me like the New Testament come to life, as if some hand had been laid on it and had for ever arrested its progress and modern development. Here it's so hushed that one should scarcely speak in one's natural voice—and yet, I don't know how it is, but I feel my critical, commonsense self acutely alive here. I've never felt more naturally aware of myself. Just a modern, interested in my new unorthodox way of seeing things. I don't know how to explain it otherwise. I feel that my old self is looking on at my new self while it is visiting the home of Jesus, walking about in His own familiar country. My new eyes are seeing what my 'churchian' eyes so queerly mis-visualised." She paused, and then as Peter did not speak she said: "Yes, you were perfectly right, Peter, when you used to call me a 'churchian,' for I only saw Jesus through the Church's eyes, and that was always the Crucified Christ, always the Christ of the Eucharist. I saw so seldom the Son of Man, the real human Jesus of Galilee, Who was so human that all His suffering now seems to me ever so much more wonderful than it did when I believed that He need not have suffered, that He could have saved Himself, because you know, Simon dear, that things never seem so bad when we don't need to do them. If I knew that I never could get back to England, how homesick I should be! . . . And now that you feel more or less the same about these things, we'll understand each other better." She laughed. "I shan't feel as if I was marrying a coloured man or a foreigner who had to make love to me in a language I only partly understood."

Partly understood! Peter started at the words. He had been so blind, lived in such spiritual darkness! Not conceited or opinionated, just benighted—but was his own new light going to blind him? How much less did Patricia now understand him, how much less did they think the same about these things!

Peter was not learned in theological questions. He had no fine powers of discussion. He had always been pleased to leave these things well alone, for different minds than his own to deal with. He

had done no more than accept the fact that Christ was man and that man is Christ ; that man had to stand on his own legs, depend upon himself for the spiritual development of the Christ that is in him. This he had believed sincerely, but how little attention he had paid to arguments. But now a new understanding had come to him. He had felt the sense of conversion. His human Jesus had become the Divine Lord, and it was the bestowal of His Divine Spirit which meant man's redemption. Man did not stand alone. Yet why did he feel that Jesus had become the Divine Lord ? The voice at dawn had not said : " I am Jesus, your Divine Lord." It had simply said : " I need you ; I am Jesus, your friend."

" I don't suppose there are even two individuals, Pat, who experience the same sensations, who feel the same elements in the atmosphere of Palestine. Personally, I haven't occupied my thoughts very much with what the Church has made of Christianity, of Jesus of Galilee, I mean." He paused. " I suppose, Pat, that to those who find help in the Church it will always continue to be to them, even to the people who have been here and seen His old familiar haunts, the necessary expression, the outward and visible form of the inexpressibly beautiful worship that fills their souls for their crucified and risen Lord, their Divine Saviour. You know, there is in all of us that curious and quite elemental need to create. A painter tries to create nature on his canvas. A sculptor tries to make man in marble. An author tries to create human beings with his pen. And so man's spiritual being tries to create a form of worship and adoration as nearly worthy of his Deity as possible." He stopped for a moment, marshalling his argumentative forces to meet the question in her eyes—her surprised eyes. Was this Peter, her own familiar friend, speaking ?

" The ceremonial has nothing to do with their belief," he went on. " Of course it couldn't have. And it's not going to help them win heaven. It's just the beautiful, and what they consider the uplifting form of it—at least that's what I take it to mean."

Again he stopped suddenly. Was that his own voice, saying these things ? Was it himself speaking, or someone else ? Was he indeed speaking in defence of the Church and its elaborate ceremonial ? How had he, all unthinkingly, come to see the meaning of its ritual ? Why had he never seen it in that light before ? Why had he considered it unworthy ?

Patricia looked at her lover. How odd it was that, now that her " churchian " religion had slipped from her shoulders, he, Simon, should quite unexpectedly be taking up the cudgels in

defence of its ritual and elaborate ceremonial! But the true reason for his fuller understanding of the variety of man's means of holding communion with Christ had not dawned upon her. In her eyes Simon was not yet Peter.

"You're right and just, I suppose," she said. "But never having been a 'churchian' yourself, you can't imagine what it all means to me, what a transformation of thought, to have seen things one way for so long and then suddenly to have lost that view—to see all these things I did as almost absurd now! To me the fine ceremonial of the Church is just the ceremonial of the Synagogue in a different setting."

She thought of her busy mornings in St. Anselm's, when she had helped to clean and make beautiful the furnishings of the altar, washed the chancel and cleaned the plate. She sighed.

Her sigh was significant. Without all these "churchian" things she was lonely, her youth was thrown back upon itself; her emotions, which had found an outlet in her emotional religion and in the sensuous uplifting of her church's daily celebrations and musical services, were now wholly dependent on the sympathy of her human lover, of Simon. He must be the recipient of her lavish giving, and he must return that giving, he must do for her all and more than her Church had done for her, because her Church had never been more to her than a substitute for the human love and sympathy which circumstances has denied her. She had never mixed in the fashionable and up-to-date society of post-war London. If she had done so, with health, wealth—sufficient wealth for more than her obvious daily needs—and beauty, she would never, of course, have felt as lonely as she did there. But she had lived with quiet, unadventuresome people—for old-fashioned folk can still live as quietly and as old-fashionedly in London as in any small town in the world, and a hundred times more dully. She was not one of the present-day girls who are too taken up with enjoying themselves, having a good time, to give any thought to religion.

Yes, Simon had to do all that for Patricia—be her world, in fact. But could he? Her pulses leapt as they sensed the possibilities of the one man in the world who could. The tremendous certainty of it flamed and burnt her.

Her sigh had told Peter now something of what was expected of him. They had long since left the breakfast table, and were now wandering about in the garden, walking automatically in the direction of a clump of ilex trees, raised above the general level of the ground by a slight mound, and sheltering a couple of seats, overlooking the lake. In silence they gained their objective, and in silence they sat down.

On the other side of the clump, distant from them by a few hundred yards, was the other seat. A man was established there, his back turned to them, his shoulders tucked into the corner.

Patricia sensed a new arrival at the friendly Hospice, and glanced critically at what was visible of him. An Englishman, she decided, judging by his boots. That was always an infallible guide to British nationality! . . . Well, she hoped he'd turn out nice!

She dismissed him from her mind, and a few minutes later laid her hand on Peter's arm. He was quite a new Peter to her, exquisitely gentle, but no nearer to her than the snow of the Swiss Alps. Her vanity was a little hurt, her spirits flattened.

Only yesterday he had been so flatteringly aware of her presence, so pleased with any endearing nearness. To-day—only the morrow of that "yesterday"—it seemed to her that this new mood of his had been going on for she couldn't say how long! It was merely the outward reflection of what had always been there, a friendship spoilt by an engagement, by a love affair which wasn't going to function.

Suddenly Peter said: "Would you mind very much, Pat, if we didn't go to Capernaum? I feel I've done enough for to-day. . . ." He stumbled over the last words, saw their meaninglessness to Patricia, and tried to correct them.

"No, of course not. Aren't you feeling up to it? You shouldn't have got up so early. Don't, please, play tricks with the climate." Patricia spoke sympathetically and at the same time a little wonderingly.

"Oh, but I am quite well," he exerted himself to say. "Just awfully fit, in fact. But wouldn't you yourself like a day off from sightseeing? Isn't there enough here and at Tabagha, without going any further?"

He pointed to the blue sea and the deeper blue of the hills, and then let his eyes travel round the leafy garden.

"Just these hills, Pat, and this sea for to-day!"

"Oh, I don't mind a quiet day, and already it's getting pretty close and steamy, and I've lots of books to read." She thought he might have included her with the hills and the sea, made her the last, if the least, of the trinity of things to enjoy. And because he didn't, she wouldn't. Her reading and her knitting—that was to be sufficient.

Peter sensed her new dignity, her hurt pride, and put his arms round her. He drew her closer to him, his first endearment that morning. The man in the other seat still had his back to them, so Patricia allowed herself to be caressed, let Peter's lips

meet hers, allowed herself to be gracious, her slender body to press more closely to his, her lips to give as well as take.

"Peter," she said softly, "for goodness' sake say you love me. Say it again and again, Peter!"

Peter kissed her, a better assurance than speaking in the mood he felt himself to be in. But as he kissed her, Patricia said:

"Peter, I need you!"

She felt him tremble. Those were the very words he had heard at dawn. The very words said to him by the Voice which had spoken as no other voice had ever spoken. How clearly he could hear it now, saying, just as Pat had said: "Peter, I need you!" . . . Yes; and now the woman he loved, whose soft body was exquisitely in need of his body and his love, had said the same thing! What could he do? How was he to serve two masters, the body and the spirit? And the body of the woman was so dear to him . . . what was he to do? It would be impossible to serve two masters, for Patricia would not share him with anyone, he knew that! To serve her he must be wholly hers—and how dearly prized that jealously exacting post had been by him, only two days ago, before they started on that drive through Judea and Galilee.

How he longed for solitude at that moment, solitude and time to become accustomed to the spiritual experience of the morning. Already his engagement was showing him something of that lack of liberty of which his married men friends had so often complained, that chaining of the spirit to the wheels of the domestic chariot.

"Peter!"

Patricia's sharpened voice startled him, recalled him from his mental wanderings.

"Where are you? What has come over you? You have quite changed. And what have I done? Tell me!"

She drew herself away from him. "No, no, don't kiss me, Peter, not again! Your kisses aren't worth—that!" She snapped her fingers. "Not that! I'm fed up with this!"

"My darling!" Peter's voice was genuinely distressed. Surely he had kissed her with a lover's passion? He wasn't in the mood for that sort of thing, but he had tried not to show it, and Pat herself wasn't always in the mood for kissing. She was far more a creature of moods than he had ever been. Yet she didn't understand.

He tried to draw her to him again, but she would have none of it. She shook her head.

"Something has made you fall out of love with me, Peter.

Perhaps only for the time being. We shall see." She laughed. "But you will have to be very much in love with me again before you find me in your arms, or get my kisses!"

"Pat!" He held out his hands.

She took them. "Don't let us be silly, Peter. Until the other feeling returns, until you can't do without my kisses, let's be good friends. We've only been lovers for such a little time, and good friends for such ages and ages. And I think, perhaps, it was better like that."

"Pat!" Peter's voice appealed to her womanly instincts, for it was the cry of a man who for the time had become like a little child. It was the pleading of a child—an evidencing of one of the endearing qualities which are not lacking in the strongest man. Men so easily become little children, they can appeal to the mother in the youngest girl when they do. Patricia felt motherly at this moment. She snuggled closer to Peter.

He was, after all, her very dearest friend, her loyal playfellow, and nothing was going to make her lose that part of him.

"Simon, dear, you're such a child!" She pressed his hands. "Such a dear, lovable child!"

He raised her hands to his lips, but even as he kissed them Patricia knew that his kisses had lost their lover's savour. He was, poor dear, over-anxious for forgiveness, he had been conscious of his abstraction. He didn't desire to kiss her, but he wanted to atone for the poor quality of the kisses he had given her.

"What is it, Peter? Tell me! Have you had any distracting letters, bad news?"

She knew that he could not have had any news, good or bad, because there had been no means of receiving it since the night before, at all events. So what had happened, she wondered, and why couldn't he tell her? Did he know himself what had happened?

And Peter was just as full of conflicting wonders. Could he tell her? She was his old friend Pat, as well as his lover. Could he not tell her that the voice of Jesus had spoken to him at dawn? That Jesus had said: "Peter, I have need of you." Tell her that that call was to help suffering humanity, to give himself to his less fortunate brothers, to serve Jesus by serving humanity? . . . But how could he tell her that, beautiful, modern Pat, in her pale primrose gown, with her boyish head and her boy's hunger for life? Would she ever want to marry a man who felt compelled to obey that voice? It sounded so mad, so utterly unlike himself, to believe in such a thing; she would doubt his sanity. . . . No, he couldn't tell her—not even Pat, not even the girl who was going to be his wife!

Patricia rose from her seat. She was not lacking in temperamental sympathy. The fondest of lovers, she knew, must be allowed independence of mind and occupation, or the barque of domestic happiness would soon be driven on the rocks. No, she wasn't going to make a yoke of their engagement. She expected him to understand her many moods, she must make allowances for his. The only thing was that Peter had never had any moods ; it was she who was moody.

"Well, I suppose we shall see each other later on," she said. "It's pretty steamy and airless here, isn't it ?"

Peter had risen also, but she pushed him back on to the seat.

"No, don't get up. Dream away there as long as you like. Don't worry !"

Peter sank back with a relieved sigh, and Patricia strolled off with a fine semblance of nonchalance.

CHAPTER XVII

OUT of sheer curiosity, Patricia deliberately passed in front of the stranger's seat. She wanted to know what the Englishman who was sitting there reading so quietly was like. As she strolled by he looked up. The eyes that caught and held her own were those of Francis Daubigny.

Patricia gave a startled cry, and the man rose. A copy of "The Seven Ages" fell to the ground as he did so. Instinctively they both stooped to pick it up, and then Patricia sank helplessly into the seat. Daubigny sat down beside her, silently.

Words would have saved them, but no words came. And silence was, alas, too golden, and more costly. It cost them both the secret they were now both anxious to keep. For now that Patricia had engaged herself to Peter, she had no right to love anyone else, or to let any other man know that she loved him.

. . . And oh, how she did love him ! How dreadfully she wanted his arms to hold her ! How poor and idiotic and false appeared her love for Peter, and Peter's love for her, how empty !

Their mute confession of love did not last a minute. When convention, that good friend in need, came to their rescue, conventional speech, with its questions and answers, was exchanged. Each did their utmost to efface the truth that had leapt into their eyes when they recognised each other so unexpectedly.

"What are you reading?" asked Patricia, with a fine show of acting and casualness of intonation.

Daubigny picked up the book which had betrayed him so basely by falling to the ground. "The Seven Ages," he said, "by 'A Gentleman with a Duster.' Have you read it?"

She shook her head.

"It's quite different from his 'Mirrors of Downing Street' and the other 'Dusters,'" although they were awfully interesting." He smiled. "It's worth reading."

"Yes?" The word was a distinct question. Patricia was glad of even that subject for discussion. To talk about anything would relieve the tension.

"The first age is Socrates, the seventh is Wesley. There is a chapter on each of the seven characters the author has selected as representing distinct ages of thought—the thoughts which have influenced mankind."

"Does Jesus Christ come into it?"

"Yes. He comes after Aristotle."

Francis Daubigny handed her the book. Patricia's fingers shook slightly as she took it.

"I have another book here." He tapped his pocket. He had seen the girl's long, firm fingers tremble, and he was determined to steady his own nerves so as to put a check on hers, by deliberately discussing irrelevant matters. And, after all, the themes of the two books were relevant to the living soul of Galilee. . . .

"It's called, 'How to Enjoy the Bible.' I've been carrying these two books about with me all over the place. They're a nice pocket size, and they are excellent companions here."

"Oh, I left the books you lent me at Cook's in Jerusalem. Was that right?" Patricia spoke more ordinarily. "Did you get them?"

"Yes, thanks, I did." He paused.

"But—why are you here?" She said the last words suddenly, helplessly.

"Why?" Again he paused, caught by the flame in her eyes. "Why?" he repeated, hesitating a little. "The real why is always hidden from us, isn't it? My objective reason is—to attend to my business . . . in connection with the big water power scheme for Palestine, you know."

"Oh, I see!" Patricia saw a very great deal.

Then they were silent again, but tremendously occupied, their minds galloping like race-horses, lashed by the whip of their emotions, while their outward beings remained exquisitely conventional and Britishly repressed.

Some women never glow, no inward fire ever disturbs their

apparent placidity, but Patricia was not one of them. Her internal bonfire, always smouldering under its unkindled fuel, would suddenly leap into flames, flash fire into her white-lidded eyes, endow her still features with the deeper beauty of passion.

It was hopeless to try and talk to her about Aristotle or Socrates, or Jesus, while her womanhood was tearing at his senses. Francis Daubigny wanted to talk to her ; he wanted her to sit beside him ; he wanted her to smile on him, her bewitching smile, so deliciously disturbing !—but he did not want to let himself go. He wanted the impossible. He wanted the girl's close, dear humanity, and yet for himself to be superhuman in his own behaviour.

"She'd make a saint want to sin !" he told himself savagely. "Her pallor is always maddening. It's the most passionately lovely thing man ever was tempted with !"

But he lied to himself—what man or woman does not, when they want to justify their weakness ?

So he kept her sitting beside him, using the books as an excuse for detaining her.

Patricia told him that she and her friend had intended to go to Capernaum that day, but that they had changed their plans, as her friend did not feel quite up to the exertion and wanted to rest. She spoke regretfully.

"If you will trust yourself to me," said Daubigny, "I can take you. I have to go there, anyway. My boat will be here in a few minutes, if you care to come."

Patricia's "Oh!" was expressive of her surprise and pleasure. Surprise at his weakness, pleasure at the idea of "doing" Capernaum in his exciting company.

"It will only take half an hour to get there by boat," he went on. "Take some lunch with you and eat it there."

"Oh, but how lovely ! . . . Only—are you sure I shan't—" She stopped. Her lame protest seemed to choke her.

Then they both laughed, and loved as they laughed.

The girl was so lovely in her pleasure that Francis Daubigny wasn't sure about anything except the fact that he had been a fool, that he was playing with fire. He might almost as well have gone the whole hog and proposed to her on sight, so certain was he that he was doing a mad and risky thing—a thing that was going to lead to more than merely accompanying her to Capernaum.

"You won't be any bother to me," said he, "if that's what you mean. I can do all I've got to do in a few minutes, and then I can show you over the excavations. We can 'do' the synagogue and come back when it's cool, later on."

He looked at her enquiringly. Did the plan appeal to her? Did it not! A day with him alone anywhere would have appealed to her. In Capernaum it would be heavenly, for there he would explain all sorts of things, and translate for her all the quaint speeches. He would probably say again to some obstructive youth, "Thinkest thou that thou art the Son of Heaven, that thou obstructest my path and causest me to walk round thee?" She smiled at the recollection.

"I'll be ready in five minutes, and I'll bring some fruit and bread and cheese with me." Her haste was the haste of a child afraid lest the promised treat should be withheld.

"Don't hurry," he said. "The boat can wait. Get them to give you a couple of eggs too. I've got my own lunch—bring all you need yourself."

Patricia fled. What did food matter? . . . As she went to her room she saw Peter walking backward and forward on their balcony. She hurried on, so as not to attract his attention.

Scarcely half an hour had passed since she had left him, yet in that half-hour a new chapter of her life had begun. . . . She determined to say nothing to Peter about her plans for the day. It would do him good. And independence of mind and occupation were as necessary to her happiness as to his. . . .

But Peter turned and saw her and smiled. He told himself that she was going for her knitting or her book. He wondered how many jumpers a girl knits for herself in a year. And with that fleeting thought of her, Patricia and her need of him passed out of his mind—ceased, in fact, to exist.

To return for a moment to Francis Daubigny. When Patricia left him to fly into the *dépendance*, he folded his arms across his chest and gazed moodily over the sea. Up to that morning he had known that if ever he allowed himself to love any woman again, that woman would be Patricia Paget. He was quite aware of that fact, but the safety lay in that little word "if." He had, up to that morning, still owned himself. The girl did not possess him. But now?—now things were different. Their unexpected meeting, her passionate betraying of what her woman's modesty would fain have kept a secret, her darling pleasure at seeing him, her shadowed eyes, everything about her, in fact, herself and all, to use an Irishism, had entered into the secret centre of his being. A new force, and an undesired one, was beginning to sway him, was holding him. Was he going to allow it wholly to master his will? It was, had he but known it, a power almost as monopolising as the spiritual experience which had suddenly come to Peter between the dawn and the daylight. Both were things

unasked, unwanted. If he did not fight it, Daubigny knew that this new force would make him act in accordance with its will, not his own ; would compel him to do the very opposite to what he always intended and vowed : make him foolish when he would be wise, act like an ass instead of a philosopher. It would not lock the stable door until the steed had been stolen.

If he had allowed himself to go on thinking about the girl when he fled from her society in Jerusalem, if he had deliberately permitted himself to dwell on her physical beauty, if he had rejoiced in the conscious knowledge that he could make her care for him, he could have understood this sudden surrender of his interior citadel ; but he had done none of these things. On the contrary, he had, by hard work and immense concentration of mind, managed to banish her almost entirely from his thoughts.

He rose from the seat under the ilex trees, and stretched out his arms to the hills. Across the water he could see the boat which was to take them to Capernaum moving towards the Hospice with direct, even strokes of the oars. . . . Well, as he had struggled against this unseen force, had in no way courted this meeting with Patricia, the whole thing was perhaps ordained, beyond his own control. For long he had been contented with a life lived without women—women that mattered, that is to say. He had trained himself into complete bachelorhood, and had often admitted to himself that it was an existence singularly and pleasantly free from worries. What a fool he was to contemplate for a moment the possibility of leaving it ! . . .

He caught sight of Patricia's hurrying figure. Ah, that pale yellow dress, so delicate, so fragrant, so expressive of the girl herself, it was fluttering in the breeze as she sped towards him—Patricia, pale, passionate Patricia !

CHAPTER XVIII

PATRICIA and her companion had "done" Capernaum. They had walked all over the length and breadth of its elevated strip of ground. They had examined with genuine interest, and many thrills on Patricia's part, the "White Synagogue," so called in Biblical times because it was all built of pure white limestone.

It was the gift to the town and to the Jews of Capernaum of the God-fearing Roman centurion whose servant Jesus healed, that broad-minded, far-seeing Roman who, by his benevolence and tolerance, made the Jews love him, and rendered easier his own difficult position. It was in Capernaum, that *most* guilty of the three guilty cities whose entire ruin Jesus predicted, that He found this Roman of whom He said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Many times they sat down together, these two modern lovers in Capernaum, always exquisitely aware of each other's presence, calling a halt for rest and conversation whenever their feet were too hot and tired to carry them further. They enjoyed sitting in that synagogue, so reminiscent of the boyhood of Jesus, and once as they rested, and gazed leisurely at the mass of fallen columns and capitals and stones, Patricia discovered on one large block, beautifully carved, the figure of a pot. To the Jews in the synagogue it had signified a pot of manna in the wilderness, the manna which fell from heaven. Francis Daubigny, who, like most men, so Patricia had discovered, knew his Bible intimately and appreciatively, instantly quoted the passage from St. Luke which suited the situation. Knowing Arabic as well as he did, the phraseology of the Bible came naturally to him. He spoke the immortal words beautifully.

"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of Me . . . This is the bread which came down from Heaven, not as the fathers did eat it and died. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever."

Francis Daubigny pointed to the carved stone.

"That pot symbolised the manna which was the living bread. Jesus was always practical in His similes. However allegorical they might be, the East understands allegory."

Patricia smiled. "I do wish I knew my Bible as you do," she said. "I never realised how little I knew it until I came to Palestine, or how beautiful it is."

"Oh, boys are taught to memorise. It comes quite easily after a bit; it's all youthful training." He paused. "It's not godliness, I assure you!"

Francis Daubigny did know his Bible, and he loved it for its beauty, as a thing apart from its other virtues.

"But wasn't Jesus awfully hard on Capernaum?" she said.

He gave a little sniff and shrugged his shoulders. "I wonder how its wickedness would compare with the wickedness of London or any other large wealthy city—any modern industrial centre? Do you remember His words when He condemned it?

... 'But I say unto you it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.' . . . He was speaking of Bethsaida and Chorazin, the other guilty cities at no great distance from here. . . . And then He goes on, 'And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto Heaven?'" He looked at Patricia. "And how His rage increased as He thought about it . . . " "Nay, thou shalt be brought down into Hades, for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which have been done in thee, it would have remained . . . "

"What were the mighty works? What had this poor city done?" Patricia looked thoughtfully at the fallen blocks and the tumbled columns. She pressed the palm of her hand on the sun-warmed stones. "What on earth had it done?"

"It had rejected His teachings. He was speaking of His own works in Capernaum. 'I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, remember.'"

"All gods are jealous." Patricia's mind flew to Zeus, and the Adonis of the *Hollowan*.

"He was angry with the city which had seen so much of His work and had refused to acknowledge Him, to accept Him for what He had told them He was—the Messiah."

Patricia was silent, and then she said slowly: "But Thebes and Memphis and masses of other ancient cities of the old world, even the superb Antioch, that sinful pagan city, are in ruins also. He might have made that same prophecy about so many cities of His day, and they would all, seemingly, have fallen under the doom He predicted for them. People make their beliefs fit into prophecies so diversely."

He looked at her sharply. How far the girl had drifted from the young lady who was going to join, to link up with the Anglo-Catholic pilgrimage in Jerusalem, the girl of his shipboard days!

"It's rather a strange thing," he said, "that almost all that remains of the city He doomed so utterly is this synagogue, built by that fine Roman centurion. And it could easily be rebuilt. It has only been overthrown by an earthquake, it has never been wilfully shattered by man. That centurion's love-gift is immortalised. Do you remember what Jesus said to the messenger who came to Him from the centurion, asking Him to come and heal His servant, and what the messenger told Jesus about his master?"

Patricia's eyes said: "Tell me! Even if I do know, I love to hear you say it. It is your voice I love to hear."

"The messenger, who was a Jew, mark you, said of his Roman master, 'He is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him, for

he loveth our nation, he himself built us our synagogue.' And Jesus went with him."

"Well, that Roman captain who loved the Jews sets a fine example of tolerance," Patricia smiled, "but I believe most Christians would rather build a mosque for the Mohammedans—as I believe we have done in the Sudan—than a synagogue for the Jews in Jerusalem, their own city!"

"Yes, I believe, generally speaking, you are right, and yet Mohammedan politicians can almost always use their religion as a slogan against us, turn any war into a religious war, make our Mohammedan subjects hate us with that awful holy hate which turns civilised men into beasts. In the Great War the Jews of England proved themselves to be loyally British, and we were more enormously indebted to their brains than the public are aware of. Besides, the regiments they formed did honour to their courage." With a sudden swift change of topic he added, "The Franciscans own this site. It is they who have been instrumental in its partial restoration, but the Jews are terribly anxious to get hold of it; they have offered the Franciscans an immense sum of money for it—a million pounds, I'm told. But it's a case of 'Nothing doing,' so far as the Franciscans are concerned, for although, of course, as an ancient synagogue it is extremely holy ground to the Jews, it is equally so to the Franciscans. All the old Capernaum friends of Jesus must have worshipped in it, Peter and Andrew and the other Apostles. And, of course, He Himself must have been brought here by His parents as a little child. The Jews take their sons to worship so regularly—observance to them is the breath of their religion. It was ever the letter and not the spirit."

"It was when Nazareth wouldn't have Him that He made Capernaum His own city, wasn't it?" Patricia said.

"Exactly. He must have been all over this district hundreds of times. For thirty years, so far as we know, He knew no world beyond Judæa and Galilee, and you know how small that area is. You can motor all over the country which composed His world in a few days, or less time than that, even. His world was such a small one, geographically speaking; that's what makes His mind so astounding!"

"I'd like the Jews to have the synagogue, wouldn't you? It seems so hard that they should only have that bit of wall in Jerusalem." She blushed; they had visited the wall together, and she had never forgotten how closely their minds had drawn together that morning and how delightfully he had explained the whole scene to her.

"Yes, but, as I've just told you, the Franciscans have refused

a million for it, so I don't think there's much chance of the Jews getting it."

Patricia gazed out over the scene spread before her.

"Well, whoever gets it for keeps," she said, "I do hope they won't go and build a big new synagogue or a huge church on the top of this site. . . . But they always do things like that, and then the whole atmosphere is lost, swamped in modernity."

"That's just it. Every possible holy spot is built over, owing, of course, to that awful sect rivalry, that desire to be top dog in Palestine. The Franciscans here are very wealthy, but of course the Russian Church has been longer at it—I mean, it has been the strongest body in the country for so long."

"What are you?" Patricia asked the question suddenly, directly, a bolt from the blue. "In your beliefs, I mean. You're a Protestant, I suppose?"

"Oh, my beliefs?" He threw back his head, the old sign of negation. "Well, that's pretty hard to say. By upbringing, baptism, confirmation . . ." he stopped. There was another sacrament he consciously withheld, "I am an R.C. All my people always have been."

"A—Roman—Catholic . . .?" Patricia's surprise was obvious. It almost amused him, but not quite; the deep significance of his words scarcely allowed of amusement even at the girl's simplicity. A sense of pity because of their personal meaning to her filled him as he looked at her questioning expression.

"Yes. If I am anything at all, I am a Roman Catholic. But apart from my inherited—er—profession of faith—for I can't call it anything better—I am an ardent admirer and a miserable follower of the world's greatest moralist and benefactor. But I fear I am far, far oftener His enemy . . ." He paused. "You see, He said, 'If you are not with Me, you are against Me.' . . . But why, may I ask, are you so greatly surprised? Why shouldn't I be a Roman Catholic? It's the oldest and finest Church, in my opinion—yes, I'm sound enough a Catholic for that."

"Oh, I don't know. Why shouldn't you be, of course? Only—well, I think I'm surprised because you—well, you always seem so logical and so amused at the people's superstitions." She smiled. "That to you sounds silly, I suppose, but it's as good an explanation as I can give you. And I was, you know—or perhaps you didn't know?—an Anglo-Catholic before I came to Jerusalem." She sighed as she said the last words.

"And since then?"

"I suppose something the same as you are, but not strong enough to do as you do."

"And what is that?"

"Just leave things alone and do your best. . . ." She was going to say, "like Peter," but so far Peter had not been mentioned. She did not want to speak of him.

"You think I stand alone—that's how Middleton Murray expresses it." He spoke thoughtfully. "It's devilish hard. . . ."

"Yes. Too difficult. Too lonely."

"Just so. It takes immense courage. And don't imagine I do it. I'm just . . . well, I suppose I do just what you say—leave things alone." He waited, and then added: "I'm afraid that's not enough. It won't take us very far, will it? Won't help us in our temptations. I'm good enough a Catholic to see that."

"Oh, you seem to me jolly well able to stand alone!"

Their eyes met, dropped. Her voice weakened, trembled a little.

"I don't know how to express what I mean, except that you are so self-contained, so able to get along without depending on anyone or anything. . . ."

"So you imagine," he interrupted. "Do you suppose I don't want just what you want, the comfort of a more comfortable religion? I suppose we all do—that all humanity is lonely."

"Yes, and there was a feeling of warmth, a soul-comfort in the Church, which was nice; it helped."

"Middleton Murray says that all human beings hate responsibility. They don't want to act for themselves, take any responsibility upon themselves. And because of that, he says, Christ was changed by the single stroke of deifying Him into an excuse for the opposite. He became the God of the Church instead of the example of man."

"He took the responsibility off our shoulders? They deified Him because man is afraid to stand alone, was that it?"

"Yes," Francis Daubigny said slowly. "Yes, they made things more comfortable, easier for poor humans like you and me. Oh, these early fathers of the faith, they were very human in their understanding!"

"Difficult enough, even then," Patricia said hotly.

"Yes. Life's a queer business. And what a very queer business it would seem to the artizan Jew of this lakeside town, if He saw it as we see it. Saw life as it is to-day in our busy commercialised West, in our New Yorks and Londons, and our industrial cities—our hells on earth."

Thus it was that they talked together naturally about these

things at Capernaum, while the personality of Jesus was a part of their day's experience. They couldn't help talking about Him in just the same way they would have discussed Napoleon if they had been visiting the field of Waterloo. They could no more help discussing Jesus and His personality and the effect of His teachings on mankind while they sat in the ruins of the synagogue in Capernaum, looking at the lake and the shore and the hills which have been immortalised by His Spirit, than they could have helped discussing any of the world's heroes. No one with even the lowest sensibilities can visit Assisi and sit silently on her hillsides or wander over her amazing plain, unaffected by the spirit of St. Francis. It is the same in Galilee, and it was delightful to Patricia to find how simply and completely her companion seemed to understand the transition which her feelings had undergone, how natural he thought it all. Perhaps it was because he seemed to have lost his old beliefs in much the same way as she had lost hers. Just dropped them, as it were, scarcely missing them until he discovered that they weren't there, that new ideas had replaced them. And it was human and dear of him to understand her loneliness, since, as he expressed it, she had ceased to make a "makeshift of the Cross."

While they were discussing their beliefs and disbeliefs, Patricia forgot that Francis Daubigny was a Roman Catholic, insomuch that when he died he would be buried by the Church, and if he married he would be married by it, that he had been baptised into it.

"How could He have been so great, so wonderful?" Patricia said musingly, "if . . ." Her sentence had slipped from her thoughts.

"What do you mean?" Francis Daubigny asked her. "In what particular way?"

"Well, if He had been divine and supernatural, He needn't have suffered; He could have done anything He liked, made everyone believe any way He liked, or prevented them from believing. Surely it is just His human suffering which makes Him so gloriously above all other men, the very fact that He willingly underwent it all, that nothing could prevent His suffering, His feeling true human agony on the cross. . . . All the same," she added, "I'm sure I shall never be strong enough to get the same help and comfort out of my Man Jesus who couldn't help Himself. . . . I know I'm not the kind that can stand alone."

She looked at her companion appealingly.

"I sometimes feel like—well, just drowning myself in worldly excitement or"—she hesitated—"in human love . . ." Her eyes said: "You do understand me, don't you?"

Francis Daubigny tore his eyes from hers. Of course he understood! Logically he had rejected the Church and the Christ of the Church, but he knew better than Patricia did how strong and how deeply rooted is the force of tradition in man's nature. Even Renan never freed himself from his religious upbringing, from the inherited tradition of his people; to the very last, long after he was a professed disbeliever, he longed for the consolation of confession. Francis Daubigny knew the force of tradition, and yet with his logical mind he assured her that the salvation of the world depended upon individuals, that it was individuals who could achieve its salvation, and that only through the belief in their own divinity.

"This Galilean," he said, "was practically the first human being who taught mankind to stand alone. He dared to tell the Jews that no propitiation of their God by sacrifice, no strict obedience to the law of their Talmud, would help them develop the spirit of God which is within us, or do anything for the salvation of their souls, or help mankind. It was a daring doctrine for a Carpenter without learning to propound."

He did not allow himself to look into her lonely eyes, or at her pale loveliness, because he saw that it comforted her loneliness to be by his side, to enjoy the consciousness that he too was often lonely; so he talked of these things to her with his eyes fixed on the sea.

Oh, if she only knew, how often, even after so many years of schooling himself, he was so lonely that he would have gladly drifted back to his Church, to its supernatural aid, if the voice of truth would have let him. If she had only known it, there were days when his soul was in the desert, there were times when he longed to make "a makeshift of the cross," days when the human emptiness of his life drove him to despair. But of all this the girl knew nothing, for he had told her nothing.

"If you even can't hope to stand alone, how can I do so?" she said, then paused. "I may look very modern," she went on, after a moment, "with my bobbed hair, knee-length skirt, cigarettes, an occasional cocktail"—she smiled—"and all the rest of it, but I'm really horribly old-fashioned, and shockingly dependent. My divine spark is almost nil. What a fanning it would take to make it flame!"

The girl's whole being was aflame now, her lonely soul, her human desires, her intellectual curiosity.

"Of course we gain self-reliance spiritually by practice, just as we develop other talents," he said. "A growing belief in your own higher self will help it to grow, just as a good opinion of your objective self helps you to get along in this world more

easily." He paused, then said: "Have you ever tried to picture, really and humanly, what the loneliness of Jesus must have been? Thought of what it meant to a young man not to have a single being who really understood what He was talking about? To know that He was absolutely alone in the world, that there was not a creature anywhere who would understand Him? The Apostles, even the best of them, didn't really understand what He was driving at. Their Jewish mentalities were too hidebound by tradition and by that awful sense of obedience to the law, observances. The things of the spirit passed them over; that was why they interpreted His sayings so wrongly, gave their own poor understanding of them to the world. Of course they did their best, because they loved and admired Him, but their minds must have left His as lonely as a drifting cloud, almost as lonely as it was when He first began to talk to them about the things of the spirit. His greatest agony was the knowledge that no one really understood."

But Patricia was not thinking about the Apostles. She was thinking about herself, about her own loneliness. Her next words showed it.

"You see, my trouble is that it's only when I feel lonely, when there doesn't seem to be much in life, that I really think about my higher self. I know perfectly well that if I could get all I wanted of material comfort, enjoyments and interests out of my life, I'd let my divine spark jolly well alone! I know perfectly well why I was so 'churchian,'" she looked him straight in the eyes. "I was bored, unloved, sick of my dull uninteresting life. That was why."

"But don't you see, that's just it—where our saving grace comes in. You never can get just what you want out of this world."

Patricia's eyes told him that for the time being, at any rate, she could, if he would only let her, so he dropped his own eyes and went on quickly:

"Life's always round the corner. The nicest things bore us after a time. You even get sick to death of a blue sky in a cloudless country. But you don't suppose, do you, that I think our souls are always speaking to us?" He threw away the stump of his cigarette. "Mine certainly does not!" He spoke as if to himself. "It deserts me for weeks at a time. There are times when it actually allows me to forget the uncomfortable things I don't want to remember." His eyes saw visions, strange visions, had Patricia known it. "But it bobs up again. It doesn't stay away too long. It comes back when I least expect it. It doesn't allow one too long a spell of material satisfaction."

"Our joy-destroying selves?"

"Yes. Our salvation from spiritual extinction, or eventual madness, if you like. The divine spark."

Patricia looked at him. He often spoke in parables.

"No, I don't think we make enough of the loneliness of Jesus," he said again. He wasn't going to be personal or to explain anything. "He must have been more lonely than our limited imagination can conceive. His death on the cross was as nothing to His life of loneliness, His desolation of spirit. . . . And it's all so understandable here, in this His own country. It makes His humanity so human, so much a thing connected with everyday life."

Patricia flung out her hand to the sea. "Can't you just see Peter and Andrew busy with their nets on that smiling shore down there?—so comfortably satisfied with their condition, and with life generally, until He came along and—opened up their minds, disturbing them with His new and extraordinary ideas—and then their eventual abandoning of their fishing to follow the golden-tongued revolutionary all over the place. So annoying to their practical-minded and worrying relatives."

"And Matthew the publican," Daubigny said, "leaving his Customs-house . . ." he paused. "His writings always suggest to me an ordinary businesslike brain, so unlike all the others."

"Customs?" Patricia said thoughtfully; "fancy Customs in Capernaum! But did they mean the same thing as they mean to-day?" She smiled. "Oh, do think of poor Matthew in the *douane* at Calais or at Modane, examining our luggage."

"More possible to visualise him at Haifa," said Francis Daubigny; "but I'm afraid the Customs he attended to weren't the same thing. I believe they refer to the tithes of the Temple."

And so they talked on and on, as they sat in the White Synagogue, living so fiercely with their dual senses that minutes were as years in the psychology of their entities. They were sublimely unconscious of the rapid deepening of their need of each other, of the tightening of those bonds of friendship and very true companionship which comes so subtly and so sublimely with the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine together.

That intimate ceremony of eating together was exquisitely enjoyed by Patricia and her lover. It was their first meal together, and it was as if their spirits knelt in thanksgiving for each other's company.

To Francis Daubigny that simple little meal shared with Patricia under the blue Galilean sky gave a sentiment which was almost sacred to the pleasure of the day. Patricia seemed to belong to him for the time being; she was his mate and he was hers.

He was permitted to wait on her, to fill her cup with wine, and prepare her fruit.

It had come to that, had it? Yes, indeed.

"Sentimental rot!" he said inwardly, "be done with it. The girl is not for you. You've made an idiot of yourself ever since you saw her smile that afternoon when you barked at her! Aren't you ashamed of your weakness?"

He put his hand in his pocket; it felt the book he had brought to read to her, to keep unruly members out of idle mischief. He offered to read some passages from it to her, just to show her, he said, how really beautiful the English of the Bible is, how perfect it is as a literary effort.

He opened the book at random, and hit upon the superb passage, which might have been less personal, since he wished to keep off personalities: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. . . ." It had been by mere chance that he had chosen that passage, and yet how significant it was! His heart was sorely troubled, he was afraid, really afraid, of the most beautiful of all things—love. . . . But it was the literary beauty of the sentence he wanted to explain to Patricia; he must do it just as the commentator¹ had done.

"Do notice," he said, turning to the book again, "how after the sudden movement of 'troubled' there comes a pause, and then, at the close, the expectant ear finds rest in the second syllable of 'afraid,' its stress of open vowels rounded off by the final consonant serving to end the sentence on a note of beautiful strength."

Patricia's eyes were eloquent. "You make everything so enjoyable," she said simply. "Are you ever dull? You can't be, surely!"

He laughed. "What nonsense! It's the author, not I, who made that passage more enjoyable."

The girl was becoming dearer and dearer; her simplicity and honesty charmed him.

"You think I'm wonderful, for instance, because I can tell you what the people here are saying. That just happens to be because I had the chance to acquire a good many Eastern languages when I was young, and so I am a little better able, perhaps, to appreciate the finer qualities in our own. And if you don't know the real beauty of our language you can't enjoy the full beauty of the English Bible, you won't appreciate the art of the early translators, you can't appreciate the flow of monosyllables in such words, for instance, as 'Blessed are the pure

¹ "How to Enjoy the Bible," by Anthony C. Dean.

in heart, for they shall see God.' or in 'The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part me and thee.' As the author points out, in these seventeen words there are only eighteen syllables. Wonderful. As he says, impossible to imitate. Try and do it!" He smiled.

His enjoyment of the translator's art was greater than hers, yet she did enjoy it. And she enjoyed his taking it for granted that she would enjoy it. Her vanity was pleased. She loved him.

After that they were silent for a few moments, but to Daubigny a lovers' silence was too dangerous, so he turned over the leaves of the book again. . . . "Read something. Do something. Don't sit and let yourself behave like a fool!" his inner voice admonished him. "If you don't occupy your own mind and hers you will drift into foolishness. Your tongue will begin babbling things better left unsaid. . . ." He looked diligently for another passage of literary beauty, and again the one he lighted on seemed strangely applicable.

"But where is wisdom to be found, and where is the place of understanding? . . . What can equal that in any other language?" he asked.

He might have told himself where wisdom was certainly *not* to be found—wisdom for himself, that is. In this girl's deep eyes, in her artlessly palpable admiration for himself. She made no secret of it, yet he knew it to be as pure and beautiful as that of a child, passionate yet innocent.

Patricia's admiration was tinged with envy. She thought that life would be far more interesting and thrilling if she could always share it with so stimulating a companion as Francis Daubigny. Of course, she admitted to herself, the fact of not knowing too much about him, the excitement of things left undiscovered, helped to enhance her interest. Amazing possibilities suggested themselves to her every time she caught his eager eyes looking at her. She wasn't such a fool as to imagine that anyone, man or woman, can retain their charm of the undiscovered after they are discovered, when the lens of matrimony has probed their very soul. . . . Suddenly, upon that thought, her subconscious wirelessed her. She was Peter's *fiancée*—she must not let herself think of any other man in the light of a lover. The wireless message did not remind her of Peter's coldness of the morning, but recalled her to her duty of that afternoon. *She must not let herself think of any other possible lover.*

Objectively she certainly had not done so, but oh! she

thought, if only life could be one long spring day in Galilee with the excitement of the unknown in her companion filling each minute of it with a subtle enjoyment. If To-day could have no To-morrow !

But the day was shrinking. It was quite time to return to the Hospice.

Suddenly she asked a wholly irrelevant question.

"How long are you going to stay at Tabagha ?"

He started. "I don't yet know." He had known when he arrived there, before he had seen her ! "How long are *you* going to stay ?"

Patricia blushed. His question had been a confession, and her blush was a token of guilt. She was engaged to Peter. Must she tell Daubigny ? Why hadn't she told him already ? Why should she tell him ? It didn't matter to him whether she was engaged or not ; he had made that only too clear ! That little inward lie made her blush still more.

Her companion swung round and left her deliberately—went off to get the boatman. Her blush was certainly not the abiding place of wisdom ! . . .

He knew now that he loved her, and he also knew that it was up to him not to let her know it, or—well, if she did know, to see to it that the knowledge was never actually expressed, never openly acknowledged between them. That was the danger—love confessed. It brought things to a crisis, the crisis of kisses ; and after that . . . what after that ?

He must not let himself get out of hand, then no harm need come of it. He was not the man he took himself to be if he behaved like a cur. . . . Poor man ! Didn't he yet know that no man is the man he takes himself to be when he is in the clutches of his passions ? . . . The man he knew himself to be had never been faced as yet with the supreme temptation which was to prove the manner of man he was.

He helped Patricia into the boat. They sat silently together, more aware of each other's close proximity than of the fact that the sea they were moving through was the Fisherman's Sea of Galilee. A sense of self and self-interest possessed them. They were primitive man and woman, swayed by the sex-riot in their nerves and their nearness to each other.

The Nazarene had not been more cast out of Nazareth than His spirit was cast out of their self-engrossed beings. The blue sea might never have seen Him or heard His stilling voice. The menders of nets might never have worked on the shore. The rich centurion of the Roman army of occupation who built the White Synagogue because he loved the Jews, had passed out of

their consciousness ; he had resumed his proper place "in the Bible," he was no longer a human being occupying the same extremely difficult position that Englishmen to-day occupy in Palestine. Had Francis Daubigny and Patricia Paget been on the Thames, sitting side by side in a boat, their thoughts would have been the same—about themselves and the difficulty of going thus far and no farther. They were the axis on which their present world turned, and they loved its turning, its giddying whirl of the senses.

They had been seated in this conscious sort of silence for some little while—a silence whose danger was becoming more and more conscious between them, when Patricia, driven into saying anything, no matter what, remarked jerkily :

" Well, I think we left little undone, don't you ? Except perhaps the house of Peter's wife's mother. She lived with Peter, didn't she, in Capernaum ? ' Peter's wife's mother ' sounds nicer than ' mother-in-law,' don't you think ? "

Her companion laughed, to save the situation, just as Patricia had thrown out the life-buoy of those idle words.

" Probably a good many more of his relatives besides his mother-in-law lived with him. The patriarchal system, which continues to this day, doesn't give young married couples much chance. One roof covers a multitude of in-laws. But fortunately the female portion of the establishment keep pretty well out of the men's way ; they herd together without troubling their lords and masters."

Patricia's thoughts flew to her own Peter. Fortunately for her, he had a satisfactory lack of relatives. Between them they would be almost without any near in-laws. That would be helpful !

Her companion wondered to himself what had caused her almost imperceptible smile of satisfaction. Already he was just a little jealous of any reserve on her part. Did he consider her extremely candid because she was impetuous and personal ? But after all, he knew nothing about her. Perhaps because, if he had questioned her about herself, he would have given her the right to do the same by him, he had not sought for information. He had allowed her to think that it was one of his idiosyncrasies to hedge himself round with mystery—or at least reserve. Part of his doctrine of standing alone, she would have called it. It had suited Patricia to have her reserves, so she had not trespassed upon his. He might not have offered to take her with him to Capernaum if he had known of her engagement. Men hate poaching. . . . But Patricia, think ! Where shall wisdom be found ? Where is the place of understanding ?

Why is it hid from men's eyes? Why is a man's love for the one woman, who by all the laws of sex-mating should be his, so often at war with wisdom? And yet the great Christian slogan is "Love one another"! "Love ye one another with"—Patricia's mind shrugged its shoulders—oh yes—"with a holy love." . . . Well, that wasn't the sort of love which her youth and its hunger for love wanted. Love without human passion to give it a flavour was a frightfully soft drink—good and wholesome, like all teetotal beverages, but you got no forrader on it!

When they arrived at the landing for the Hospice, Francis Daubigny allowed the boatman to help Patricia to jump clear of the boat on to the pebbly shore. Her certain knowledge of his reason for so doing did not help matters for the girl, rather it added to her annoyance. The boatman was clean, as are all Mohammedan men, but he was a native. Patricia shied away from him, and slipped. There was water rising under the pebbles; they moved. Francis Daubigny, of course, caught her, held her, kept her in his arms for one moment. A young thing that had homed, her body nestled there.

Ah, Patricia, did you know it? Did you mean it? Exquisite Patricia, so innocently burning, so driven by your desires, so unconsciously harmful in your loving. What *did* you know, and what didn't you? Were you to blame, or was it your Maker, who gave you that beautiful slender body and that smouldering volcano of passions?

When Daubigny had placed her on a secure spot on the shore, he turned quickly from her and walked up the same difficult bank which Peter had walked up at dawn.

Patricia carefully picked her way behind him, her mind racing on ahead with speculation. Now, she supposed, he would run away from her, as he had done in Jerusalem. She didn't so much care, at the moment, if he did. Nothing very much mattered as yet, while she still felt his arms holding her, while she could feel them pressing her closely to him. Just for one moment they had held her really, but in her fancy he was holding her still, not stalking on ahead as though she was a naughty little girl who had got her best kid shoes wet while out with papa!

By the time they had both reached the top of the difficult bank, Francis Daubigny had recovered himself, recaptured his habitual rather distant air—that air of reserve which provoked the feminine in Patricia. He thanked her almost conventionally.

"It was so kind of you to come," he said formally. "I have enjoyed my day immensely. I hope you have."

And Patricia, with fury in her heart, was equally formal and

conventional in her thanks to him. But in her mind she upbraided him stormily.

"Oh!" she cried inwardly, "you can't banish me like that! You can't behave as if you had never given yourself away, as though you hadn't hugged me into your very inmost being! Oh, you can put on that *Helouan* air and become the Anglo-Arab of long ago as much as you like, but you can't cheat me. You can't be so cold and distant that I'll end by imagining that you just helped me when I fell, like the perfect gentleman who observes the canons of polite society! No, you can't! I won't let you!"

They parted with charming politeness on both sides as the keynote of their behaviour.

CHAPTER XIX

PATRICIA did not see Peter until dinner-time that same night.

She did not call out to him as she passed his door, or go to look for him. A little of her annoyance at his behaviour in the morning had come back to her. . . . Men were all alike, picking a girl up and then dropping her just as it pleased them! . . . Patricia had very little churlishness in her nature, and scarcely any quality for lingering resentment or revenge. Her flashes of anger were always short-lived, vanishing completely when her feelings were relieved. All this as a rule, but her pride at the moment was stiffening her resentment. The Anglo-Arab's "You're a naughty little girl" attitude made her think she was angrier with Peter than she really was. He was the scapegoat for the other man's offences, and his own were magnified in consequence.

It was early days for him to have shown indifference, to have let her go off to Capernaum with a stranger! . . . Conveniently she ignored the fact that she had not told Peter where she was going or with whom; but no matter! . . . He had been so foolishly jealous in the Casa Nova when she had mentioned Francis Daubigny, indirectly, as an interesting passenger on the boat—and now . . . he let her go off with him—oh, well, what if he didn't know, she *had* gone, all the same, and Peter hadn't bothered, evidently, or he'd have been looking out for her return! An inconsequent, angry little lady, you will perceive.

As she slowly began her toilette for the evening meal, Patricia's mind dwelt in injured fashion upon Peter and his behaviour. Had their engagement made him already so cocksure of her? Well, if it had, she would let him see! . . . She had no idea that she was making a scapegoat of him. She did not allow herself to think of what that cocksureness, as she called it, had allowed her to do and to enjoy. While the subtle meaning of that enjoyment rushed through her, like new wine pouring through her veins, it drove her foolish anger away, it left no room for it.

She blushed softly. Could she honestly say that she would have enjoyed her day at Capernaum as much with Peter? . . . Well, of course, she knew Peter so well there was nothing left for her to discover about him, and the unknown is always more exciting than the known. Love unconfessed is still a battle to be gained. And is there any other victory like it? The battle of the senses will outlive the battle of the Somme in the history of mankind. . . . And Patricia was woman enough to be a most delightful humbug and a subtle self-deceiver. She said to herself that it was so wise and so clever of dear Peter not to let himself become a bore, one of those tiresome lovers who can't trust their *fiancées* out of their sight, one of those men who behave like sultans once a woman has promised to be theirs. Well, Peter, thank goodness, wasn't like that. Of course he was going to own her, so to speak—for a wife, even in these modern days, "belongs" to her husband, he has certain rights over her; but Peter was evidently not going to abuse those rights—and he'd better not try!

Patricia ran her mind over the list of her married women friends. No, a wife certainly wasn't a free-lance, unless she was so little of a wife in the true sense of the word that her husband cared little or nothing about what she did or whom she was with; and—well, Patricia had no desire to be that sort of wife! But alas, Patricia, that's just your way. You want both to eat your cake and have it.

She knew some wives whose husbands had ceased to care what they did, who were too much occupied in frying their own fish to enquire into the efforts of their wives in that direction. And these free-lance wives weren't happy; she had seen them take up all sorts of work—social and political—but it didn't fill the emptiness of their hearts. Yes, it was all very well . . . Patricia paused, she hated confessing it even to herself . . . but the fact remained that women liked being owned; even the most modern of the sex couldn't be bothered with the man who hadn't that quality of ownership in his make-up. If they were true

daughters of Eve they liked the masterful touch in their Adams. . . . But there was moderation in all things, and Simon would never go beyond that necessary limitation. . . .

Patricia watched her pale face blush in the mirror as she fastened a heavy string of amber beads round her throat, while a sudden rush of truth invaded the self-deception of her mind.

She wanted to be owned. She wanted her owner to be jealous of any man who obviously admired her. She wanted Peter to care very greatly when he learnt that she had spent a long day at Capernaum with Francis Daubigny.

But how was it that Peter never would fit into the picture? If Peter were jealous, if he wanted to prevent her from being the free-lance she had been up till now—well, he would just be jealous, and nothing more. Her old familiar friend could make no masterful sultan. Was he, by nature, too—well, considerate, too kind? Well, for her at any rate he wasn't the masterful sort. And better love unhappily than not love at all. A heart breaks because it feels too much, not because it hasn't felt . . . "hasn't felt" is damnable! To feel and feel and make others feel—that is living, that is what she wanted her living to be, not a thing of negative happiness, not a thing of gentle consideration . . . damn consideration!

She slowly finished dressing. The simple life of the Hospice demanded no fine clothes, but the girl possessed that instinct for colour and for matching the dress to the occasion which made her always seem perfectly attired. The grey-blue frock she now put on, and which could probably have gone through the post in an envelope, suited her exotic beauty. It suited her shadowed eyes, her fragility of build. It seemed to clothe her in clouds; a heavenly softness enveloped her. She was delicious to look on, a very living danger. Patricia's budding good looks had very quickly opened out into beauty.

In her cloudlike clothes her purity was inseparable from her passion. Her refined little face accused gross natures as they looked at it, her desire to live fully and at the same time purely was so unmistakably a part of her appeal.

CHAPTER XX

DURING Patricia's absence Peter had lived furiously.

He had occupied himself with nothing, just allowed the hours to slip past unheeded, because their every minute gave him some

new and inward revelation. It was like turning over the pages of a book which held the key to problems which he had often tried to solve and failed. One fresh meaning of life after another seemed to unveil itself before his eyes.

When one o'clock struck on the Hospice clock, it might just as well have been seven. Peter was quite oblivious to the flight of time.

He had even forgotten Patricia's absence! Forgotten that the girl whom he had asked, only three days ago, to be his life's companion was somewhere, probably close at hand, ready to let him make love to her and talk to her in lovers' language. He had not thought of such things, because he simply couldn't deal with a lover's thoughts. There was no room in the new Peter for such things. There wasn't a corner for Patricia in his whole wondering being. His need of her did not know him. He was a stranger to human passions; desire had left him.

To have found Jesus and remain in touch with anything else was impossible, and Peter knew that he had found Jesus, that he had been given that wonderful grace. Others might disbelieve, might call it what they liked; these things no longer mattered, for he knew, as a truth that could not be doubted, with the conviction of certainty itself, that Jesus had spoken to him on the shore of the Fisherman's Sea. He was never going to ask himself again—or so he thought, poor Peter!—how he knew that the voice that woke him at dawn was that of Jesus. He was just going to believe because his consciousness knew that it was Jesus. That was all, and that was everything.

To have found Him in Galilee, to have listened to His message by the lakeside there, wasn't that more than sufficient to separate him from the material world? Sufficient to make him lose all sense of Patricia?

As he sat on where Patricia had left him, under the group of ilex trees overlooking the lake, Peter's mind was occupied at one moment with some direct flashes of understanding, and at the next with instances in history or in the Bible of sudden spiritual revelations to mankind. He was experiencing a spiritual awakening which was working in him a greater change than years of everyday events could have effected. Little wonder, then, that Patricia had found it hard to understand what had come over him.

His thoughts dealt with the conversion of St. Francis of Assisi, whose seventh centenary was just then being celebrated all over Christendom. A wonderful conversion that, which had changed the worldly young man who loved fine clothes into the saint who stripped himself of all his garments in the

public Piazza in Assisi, as an outward token of his surrender to God's command, "Give all thy goods to the poor, and follow Me."

But that conversion, he argued to himself, was the result of a serious illness. Francis had been almost dying—and people see visions under such conditions. And—well . . .

His mind left that knotty point, and flew back to Socrates, the forerunner of Jesus. He pondered over the very strange experience which had changed the direction of the soul of the old Greek philosopher. As a citizen of Athens, Socrates had to serve as a soldier. His great physical strength was well known to everyone, a frequent subject of discussion and comment. Yet one day he was discovered standing in a trance, and seen to fall to the earth. For twenty-four hours that trance lasted, and during that time, when his body was helpless, his spirit underwent an experience which not only "transformed his life, but transformed the life of the human race." But—well, here again there were special circumstances—that trance for Socrates corresponding to the mortal illness of St. Francis—whereas he, Peter, was just in his normal physical condition. . . .

. . . He saw people coming and going through the Hospice garden, visitors arriving or departing ; he saw boats moving on the quiet sea below him, boats manned with fishermen who differed but little from the fishermen who had left their nets and become Apostles. . . . His eyes took in all these things, but his objective mind was scarcely conscious of them. Automatically he obeyed the conventional training of his youth, and rose when the luncheon-bell sounded, and went to his room to tidy himself before going on to the dining-room.

His outward behaviour at the meal was that of a conventional, well-brought-up young man, so great is the force of early training. He talked rationally with his next neighbour, the wife of an Indian Government official who, with her husband, was spending a few weeks of their leave in Palestine. She was an intelligent woman, and her conversation, chiefly upon the subject of Young India's aspirations, was worth listening to. So was that of the beautiful young woman near her, a Jewess who had come to Palestine to gain information at first hand on some much-discussed points of the Zionist movement. If Peter's wits had not been wool-gathering, he would undoubtedly have allowed himself to be greatly interested in what she was saying, but . . . one cannot go through spiritual experiences and at the same time keep in tune with the thoughts and ideas of one's material *milieu*. His conversational efforts therefore were somewhat perfunctory.

Still, he did manage to discuss the question of the city Arabs and their objection to paying for the upkeep of those benefits which the British Government had bestowed upon them during their occupation of Jerusalem. It seemed to him, he said, that the Arab, far more than the hardworking Jew, expected to get everything for nothing.

The Jewish lady laughed. "The Jew," she said, "never expects to get anything for nothing, and that is the Arab's principal grudge against him. The Arab says that the Jew works too hard. He means to succeed, he won't idle if he can find work."

"Certainly," Peter said, "the Arab enjoys, and knows how to enjoy, 'doing nothing.' The Jew, I suppose, doesn't—and can't."

"Yes," the handsome Jewess said, "that's quite true. Their pleasure seems to be 'making good,' making a livelihood against all odds."

Peter smiled. "Pretty tough odds at times, I'm afraid," he said. "It seems to me, speaking superficially, that the Zionist movement has shown up a very ugly spirit amongst Christians all the world over. In the Arab hatred, at least, there's no reflection on their beliefs. They are no hypocrites. They frankly despise all unbelievers, and make no pretence of trying to love their enemies, whereas we Christians preach one thing and do another. I know lots of people in England who hate the Jews and think the Zionist movement simply dreadful. They pretend they think it unfair to the Arabs, and they swallow whole every lie that's uttered about the movement, without taking the trouble to find out the real facts."

The dark-eyed beauty smiled. "But the English at least are not our enemies, as are the peoples of Europe generally."

She paused, then: "Of course your religion is so superhuman," she said, "so well-nigh impossible, that is why there are no Christians."

Peter felt a sudden thrust, a quick, sharp reminder of what being a follower of Jesus really meant—being a Christian, not merely professing to be one. It meant trying to live up to the superhuman code of morals and ethics which He laid down on the very shores of this lake. . . . He could scarcely speak, and yet he had to pull himself together.

"I was not thinking of English, or German, or any particular body of Christians," he said, "I was simply speaking of professing Christians generally. They have gone on hating Jews for nineteen hundred years. They have prided themselves on their hatred of them, and yet they have societies for the con-

version of Jews to Christianity, and the first Christian in the world told us to love our enemies. He never asked anyone to hate the people who persecuted Him. We were to love them, not hate them, for His sake. He never once said, 'If you love Me, hate My enemies.' He understood only too well how natural it was for the Jews to hate Him and persecute Him."

The Jewess looked at him, at the shining light in Peter's eyes, at the indescribable expression of an inward flame.

"A charming young man," she said to herself. "He is feeling Palestine tremendously—and how they must feel it." she thought, as she watched Peter covertly from behind her beautiful lashes, "if they really and truly believe, as he believes. Something like virtue goes out of him when he speaks."

After luncheon Peter again went out, and sat by the lakeside. He was finding himself. He felt like an aviator at a high altitude whose supply of oxygen was giving out. The rarefied atmosphere was too much for him. He was scarcely conscious, losing touch, without realising the fact. From his tremendous altitude the world below him had become, as it does to the high-flying airman, a little smudge. The oxygen he must breathe into his lungs from his reserve supply was work, some practical occupation.

He fetched his diary from his room and began to write it up—he had neglected it for three days. For a few moments he wrote steadily, forcing himself to concentrate his mind on the doings of these last three days. But gradually his pen slackened: he was reaching Galilee—beginning to describe briefly that drive with Patricia . . . it was then that words evaded him. He adjusted his fountain-pen—it was not flowing . . . he tried again. . . . It was no good, for instead of his own words coming, as they usually came, very simply and naturally, he found himself murmuring texts from the gospels and epistles he had learnt as a boy. All sorts of odd portions of the Scriptures came rushing into his mind from some hidden reservoir which, unknown to him, was a part of him, had been always hidden in him.

Peter was dressing for dinner, but his mind was still very far away from his body. If Patricia had tapped at his door to announce her return, he would not have heard her. He was oblivious still of her very existence, wholly occupied with the new meaning which life had taken on since he arrived in the Hospice.

For some time after his return from the lakeside he had sat in his room, thinking, thinking. . . . How well he understood now why Christ went into the wilderness alone. Surely solitude is necessary to a man's spiritual awakening. Peter longed for solitude. Would the great spiritual experience fade away and

leave him at contact with the material side of life? Would it vanish, as fine ideas do vanish from a writer's pen before they reach the paper? Would it slip into the past and leave no trace on his everyday life in the future if he had to throw himself into the world of to-day?

He wanted to stretch out his arms—not for Patricia to fill, but to the world—to tell the world of all that had happened, to let it know that from henceforth his old world must leave him alone, leave him to wonder and wander over Galilee and Judea, just to wander everywhere, into the solitude of the desert, and on the smiling hilltops—yes, just anywhere, so long as he was out of the material world and alone with his new spiritual self. . . . “In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” The words came to him instinctively. He wanted to get away from the world—yes, from the world that held Patricia, the woman he loved. He could never overcome the world, the world would overcome him.

Peter's world had not been difficult. No, it had been a happy and easy world. But now, if he was to return to it, how full of tribulation it would be! And was that to be the result of . . . Peter paused. Was that what true Christianity meant? “Being a Christian” meant living in a world that was full of tribulation and learning to overcome the world, as Christ overcame it.

He had been happy and contented in his world before; could he not be happy and contented in it again, if he returned to it? The words of the beautiful Jewess came back to him: “Of course your religion is so super-human, so well-nigh impossible. That is why there are no Christians. Why, the war showed it up!” And it did! Well, perhaps it was a lost cause from the very start—but without lofty ideals what would man sink to? . . . If the world wasn't going to be the nice, comfortable, happy place Peter had always found it, was that the price he was asked to pay for his awakening? A big price—a huge price—just fighting in a lost cause all the time . . . the old story, like trying to turn the infidels out of Jerusalem . . . a high ideal, botched and lost and besmeared, because man is not super-human. . . . Well, anyhow, ideals might be dragged through the mud, but no mud ever stuck to them, they remained as white and as pure as the lilies whose roots are buried in dirt.

. . . But Peter must hurry up. A whole day in which to do nothing—nothing but think—and yet when it came to dressing-for-dinner time, he had to hurry! He had done nothing? Really? Why, he had never spent such a full day in his life,

never lived so quickly or with such awareness—never felt so pressed for time !

He gave himself another “ sparrow-splash,” poured the whole contents of a terra-cotta water crock down his back, and incidentally on to the tiled floor . . . and that, of course, did not help his hurry !

However, at last he was dressed, and again this dreamer, this seer of visions, this suddenly converted mystic, looked a very well-turned-out young man—extremely up-to-date.

He opened his door. Surely by this time Patricia must be back from wherever she'd been to. Why hadn't she come to look for him ? What a long time she'd been away ! . . . His bath had refreshed him ; the lights of the Hospice, and the scented garden, had brought Pat vividly back to him. . . . She had looked lovely in the garden.

He shut the door behind him rather decisively, as if he were shutting into its privacy the events of the day.

He must be jolly nice to Patricia. She had taken it awfully well. . . . Taken what well ? . . . Well, she had been a perfect companion, and he had not been appreciative enough. He had treated her rather cavalierly . . . only he couldn't . . . Hang it ! He must make up for it after dinner. And thank goodness, Pat wasn't the sort to make a fuss about nothing. She was more like a man in that way, didn't easily get huffy.

He stood for a few moments looking at the garden.

When he was an old man and had lived his life, would he remember this night ? Would he remember anything of its stinging strangeness, its vivid reality ? What would his life be to look back upon ? Would it bear any significance of the experience which he had undergone on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, or would he be looking back across a lifetime of years spent as he would have spent them if no voice had spoken to him ? At the end of his life would this all seem like a passing mystic occurrence, a Galilean experience which could not be put to any fruitful use in the everyday world ?

With no rest for his mind, with a bewilderment of fears and chills and wonders devastating him, Peter walked along the balcony to Patricia's door.

CHAPTER XXI

WHEN Peter passed Patricia's door on his way to the balcony stair, she called out :

" Is that you, Simon ? "

When Patricia felt fondest of Peter she usually called him Simon.

" Yes, darling, it's Peter. You nearly dressed ? "

Patricia's face appeared at the door, just her clear, pale face, nothing more, thrust through a narrow opening. Her subconscious sense of guilt forced her to make the gentle sound of a kiss, a loving, inviting sound.

Peter's head bent, he pressed his lips to hers.

After a moment's silence, Patricia said: " Simon darling, I've had such a lovely day."

Again Peter kissed the soft, open lips. It was easier to kiss than to speak, but he had to say something.

" I'm so glad, Pat." He spoke sincerely, gratefully.

Patricia withdrew her face and placed one of her cool palms against his cheek.

" Missed me, Simon ? " she asked. " You haven't asked where I was. Did they tell you in the Hospice ? "

Peter pressed her hand to his face lovingly.

" Did you miss me, Simon ? "

Patricia didn't give him time to tell her that he had not even troubled to find out; not having seen Miss Cresswell at the Hospice luncheon table he had subconsciously thought of them as being together "doing" some site or other. And as Patricia seemed more anxious to know if he had missed her, he made no attempt to answer her first question. And he could not tell her the truth, so he just told the conventional lie.

" Of course I missed you, beloved ! "

What else could he have said ? It appeared too little to satisfy Patricia, as it was. She thought he might have made the remark off his own bat, felt rather doubtful, indeed, as to whether he had really missed her, rather hurt about it. The fact that she had not missed him was forgotten. Anyhow, that belonged to quite another story. Besides, she had been doing so much, seeing all Capernaum, and the newest excavations, while Peter had just been sitting in the Hospice garden, lazing. He ought to have missed her horribly !

She quickly pulled her hand from his face and shut the door upon him. Peter walked slowly down the stair to the garden.

He had said he had missed her. Already it had become necessary to tell a lie because he was ashamed to tell her the truth, ashamed to say: "Listen, Pat, to what I've got to tell you. Listen to the reason why I didn't and couldn't miss you!" Already the world he lived in was surely and easily distancing him from the world he had lived in for that day. The Voice was fading with extraordinary swiftness, it was receding farther and farther into the background; soon it would dip below the horizon and lose itself in the land of Dream-Absurdities. The dreadful necessity of accommodating himself to the conventions and habits of his old world made him tremble. He had only seen Pat for two minutes, yet that fraction of time was emblematical of his life as it must be, if he attempted to serve two masters . . . but of course he wouldn't. He would just end in serving one—the dear world, the dearer flesh, and the devil. . . .

He and Pat would spend a glorious evening together. A lovers' evening in the scented garden. He would be able to convince her that he had missed her, which of course he would have done if he had not subconsciously known that they were going to meet again very soon.

He walked slowly towards the main building, drinking in the sweet evening air, certain of his deep love for the girl whose lips he had just kissed. Her pale passionate face, her crimson inviting mouth, her shadowed haunting eyes went with him through the garden, appearing and disappearing like the flitting of a fire-fly.

How lovely she was! How sweet the thought that she wanted him to miss her—and of course he had! Again he argued the fact. His love for her and hers for him must have nothing to do with whether either of them had missed the other for a few hours. Patricia was only putting on a pretty lover's pretence. He hadn't missed her objectively simply because she was a sweet certainty at the back of his mind. But rob his mind of that certainty? . . . Well, he was thankful that Pat had often told him that she must be a free-lance, that they must have perfect confidence in each other, that matrimony can never be "holy" if the man's or the woman's spirit or body is held in bondage. Pat was no slave-woman. Her husband must be her comrade, her partner, never her master. He smiled as he pictured to himself Patricia with a master! . . . he wouldn't try the sultan trick very long!

A picture came before his eyes of a slim, glossy black cat sending a big Airedale dog to the right-about—with its stumpy tail trying to get between its legs! He had watched the big dog approach the cat with a fine air of masterfulness; he had seen the back of the black cat make itself into a hook, he had seen its green eyes fix themselves on the eyes of the Airedale, just for one second, not more—but it was sufficient. Not wishing to be blinded for the rest of its natural life, the dog had slunk away. The cat's back had unhooked, it had stretched itself, and with perfect grace of movement curled up in the sun. . . .

Well, he could see Pat's eyes glitter, could see her slender body leap with the grace of a wild forest thing . . . and he could see the man who tried to be her master vanish with his tail between his legs!

So Peter thought. So he imagined Patricia to be. So little did he know of feminine human nature. And he was one of those male things so constituted as never to know. Experience would never teach him.

CHAPTER XXII

AFTER dinner they walked in the garden.

During the evening meal Patricia had been nervously silent. Seated next to Peter, she knew that she was under the critical and searching lens of the Anglo-Arab's eyes—those piercing eagle eyes. She knew that he was saying to himself, "They must be engaged," and this because Peter seemed to be exerting himself to be more than usually attentive to her.

Patricia was angry with herself. Why had she not told Daubigny about Peter? Her silence had made so much more of it; he would wonder why she had said nothing—think she was afraid. . . .

Then suddenly she had a premonition. Her engagement to Peter wasn't going to last. It just couldn't. Something told her that. So why say anything about it . . . to Daubigny?

She couldn't let it last, because it wasn't going to be the most thrilling thing in her life—and it scarcely seemed as if it was that even to Peter. She knew that if it had been what she had

hoped it might be for herself, when she had not expected to meet those eagle eyes again, she just could not have kept silent about it. She would have had to speak of it—to Daubigny or any other companion of a whole day's outing. It would have been the most natural topic of conversation . . . like the "my wife" of the young husband, which had so often amused her—the "my wife" which he could never keep out of any conversation for more than two minutes. . . . Besides, the Anglo-Arab wouldn't have needed to be told, for Love needs no telling. A man who knows the first three letters of the feminine alphabet knows when a girl's affections are engaged, knows when he himself matters no more to her than a mechanical figure, so far as his sex is concerned.

But Peter's anxiety to be attentive to her, to make up for his neglect of the morning, had let the cat out of the bag. . . . Well, as an engaged young woman, the property of a nice man like Peter, the eagle eyes wouldn't want to see so much of her. There would be for him a lack of that thrill which every man experiences, more or less, when he is enjoying the companionship of a girl whose affections are not already bespoke. Now when they met she would have to tell him. It would be rather a horrid telling, but in the meantime she was going to enjoy herself with Peter, be her very nicest to him . . . and this determination was not consciously mingled in Patricia's mind with the desire to awaken the jealousy of her day's companion. Not consciously, because, as has been said, Patricia was a beautiful humbug, an adept in the art of self-deception, a woman, in fact, in whom the elements were so mixed up that nature might well stand up to the whole world and say, "This is a woman."

They walked about the garden arm-in-arm, they kissed many times under the kindly screen of oleander and orange trees, and when they were not kissing—and you know how often that is with young lovers—Patricia tried to interest Peter in what she had seen in Capernaum, tried to tell him about her day there—with reservations, of course!

And Peter gave her his undivided attention, or thought he did, and it should have been an easy thing to do, for the girl was at her loveliest under that night sky, and so loving.

And what a sky it was, spread above them like a bridal canopy! What a mystic space of purple! What a brilliant galaxy of southern stars, what a depth behind their shining! What a sweetness in the Galilean air! . . .

They were standing as unobserved lovers may stand in an Eastern garden, when a clear call rang through the air. At the

first note of it they pricked up their ears. It was the "Eshee" or nightfall prayer—the second call to prayer of the Moslem day, which begins at sunset.

Peter started, almost trembled. Patricia felt him thrill. He let his hands drop to his side. Patricia stood free. Like a cloud dropped from the sky, she rested on the earth.

They listened. Across the lake, and over the land which Christians have called Holy, the harmony of that cry went ringing and travelling. It was the same challenge to Christianity which Peter had heard the night before, because almost every Moslem prayer begins with the same words :

"There is no Deity but God,
He hath no companion in the great Dominion."

When the muezzin's sonorous voice faded out of the air, when its vibrations were no longer in it like the soft throbbing of an organ, a deeper soundlessness held the world. It seemed as though all humanity was breathing in the words, feeding on them in its heart.

Patricia looked at Peter. She would have said something to him, but his expression stopped her. She was going to say : "It almost makes you agree with the Voice, doesn't it ? It sounds so convincing, so absolutely sure. You feel like saying 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a—Moslem !'"

But where was Peter ? What was he seeing, what was he thinking about ? How completely he had left her ! Again she said to herself : "Two days ago this couldn't have happened. This is a Peter I don't know. This is a dreamer, a mystic, not my ideal Farmer's Boy !"

And Peter—where was he ?

The moment the cry rang out all sense of the present deserted him. He was not in the garden with Patricia, he was back in the night before. He was going all over the whole wonderful event again ; each incident in it, as it had happened, screened itself before his eyes. . . . What a long time it seemed now since he had asked himself the question, Was he awake or dreaming ? Since he had placed that chair in the middle of the floor. Since he had heard that midnight Moslem challenge !

All his arguments of the day, all his meditations, all his fears at the dawn rushed over his detached consciousness, held him, forced themselves forward, demanded a place. . . . What had he made of his experience ? What was he going to make of it ? What was he doing now ? . . .

Patricia put her hand through his arm.

"Some of these mueddins have wonderful voices," she said. "Mr. Daubigny says that in Cairo, in most of the big mosques, they are chosen for their fine sonorous voices, but as a rule the city mueddins are blind. The position is given to them for that reason, because they can't see from the high minarets into the women's courtyards or on to the flat roofs of the harems. It's wonderful the way the sacredness of the harem is respected, don't you think?"

She stopped. "Are you listening, Peter? Have you heard a word of what I've been saying?"

She spoke teasingly, but her voice fell.

"Yes, darling." He had heard the last words she had spoken, but they had conveyed little to his intelligence.

Patricia put a hand on each of his shoulders and wheeled him affectionately round until he faced her.

"Tell me just what I said. What was I talking about?"

Peter caught her to his breast and held her there. It was so much easier to do that than to talk!

She laughed happily, and then her laughter tailed off into a soft sigh. He still held her silently, but her yielding lessened. A slight withdrawal of sympathy made her stiffen her sensitive body. The next moment she spoke and aired her grievance.

"Even now you aren't holding me, Peter. I'm in your arms, but you aren't here. You don't really feel me. I don't matter . . . I'm nothing to you."

She drew herself out of his tightening embrace.

"No, I won't have it. Not any of it! If you don't want me, say so, but don't for any sake make a pretence of being my lover. I don't want a . . ." She paused. "Thing like that for my husband" was what she was on the point of saying, but she substituted, "I don't want a machine-made man!" Her voice trembled. "We've only been engaged for three days, but if it's a failure, say so! . . . Why don't you acknowledge it? Don't mind me!" She spoke the last words hardly.

"Patricia!" Peter tried to take her hands in his—they were all she would allow him to hold of her. "Pat, dearest, how can you suggest such a thing?"

"Because I feel it. Because already I feel that you can't be bothered with my kisses. . . . And yet . . ." she stopped, "you certainly did seem to care, such a short time ago. You seemed to care most awfully."

Her cheeks suddenly flamed. She fell silent. He had cared so much more than she ever had. Perhaps he cared more even now, but then she had made no protest of her caring, she hadn't asked him to be her husband! He had *got* to go on caring, or she

wouldn't marry him. . . . Oh, the whole thing was rotten—a mistake—an attempt on her part to drown her loneliness. And now she felt more lonely than ever. It was—damnable!

Peter stood before her, crushed and miserable. There was just that cruel grain of truth in her accusations which made them so appallingly hard to refute. . . . He knew that desire had gone out of him. He loved her, but for the present he did not want her. He knew how volatile, how evanescent, a man's desire for a woman is, but Patricia could not be expected to understand that! She seemed to think that a lover's ardour must always be at fever heat, always there and always the same; that a man could always make himself feel as the woman wanted him to feel—thrilled by her near presence—always in the humour to respond to her mood. . . . His summing-up of Patricia's character less than an hour ago was forgotten!

He looked so crestfallen and so guilty, as he stood before her, silently holding her hands, that Patricia said gently and lovingly: "Really, Peter, if this had happened in London, or even in Jerusalem, I might have thought that you had met someone else whom you liked better than me, that you had suddenly fallen in love, for you look and behave just like a man who has. But here in Galilee, in the home of cranks, I don't see how that could have happened. Miss Levy is charming and her eyes are wonderful, but she is in love with Zionism . . . and besides . . . Oh, what is it, Peter?"

Her voice became more coaxing. "Out with it! I'm your old friend as well as your new lover of—how long?" The last words ended on a wistful, questioning note.

Peter tried, haltingly, to reassure her, and failed lamentably.

"Oh, my dear Simon!" she said. "Just as if a woman doesn't know when a kiss is not a kiss, when it is—" she snapped her fingers, then broke off abruptly, nervously, drawing in her breath, for they were no longer alone. Francis Daubigny had appeared, he was so close to them that he must have heard her last words.

Patricia crimsoned to the roots of her hair, but the heavens were kind, for in spite of their passion of stars the eagle eyes did not notice the rush of blood from her beating heart which dyed her Dantesque pallor. Then, with a splendid rallying of her nerves, she said, almost naturally:

"Let me introduce Mr. Peter Armitage," and after the faintest pause—"my *fiancée*."

Even as she said the words, Patricia saw their absurdity. Why had she said them? Why hadn't she said instead: "You've come across us on the brink of breaking off our stupid engagement

which hasn't lasted a week. It was a silly mistake, but now I am free, and I didn't tell you that I was engaged when I was with you to-day in Capernaum, because something told me then that it wasn't going to last, and as an unengaged girl I knew I would have a better time."

But of course she couldn't have said all that—not in front of Peter, anyway! . . . So she had just said the obvious thing, under the circumstances, and now stood in silence watching Francis Daubigny, as he took in the sense of her surprising announcement.

But her watching told her very little. Francis Daubigny was too much a man of the world, and had himself too well in hand, to give the show away. His behaviour told her nothing at all. His expression had scarcely changed ; it had, if anything, expressed genuine pleasure at her announcement—the outcome, had she but known it, of a sudden sense of relief, of security.

The two men shook hands naturally and, if the word is not too strong, sympathetically, for they had instinctively approved of one another.

Patricia, the introduction effected, left Peter to do the talking. He must rouse himself ! And he did. Conventionality again proved its own reward. He talked so easily to this Englishman whom Patricia had nicknamed "the Anglo-Arab"—and how admirably the title suited him!—that she was nettled. He hadn't taken the same trouble about her. He was making himself charming to a stranger, who meant nothing to him, while for herself, his *fiancée*, he had not bothered to do so! . . . Oh, why had she ever come to Palestine?

And yet, if she hadn't, she would never have met the man who was talking to Peter at the moment—talking just as if it didn't in the least matter about her being engaged to be married . . . when she had actually felt, not so many hours ago, the passion in his brief embrace of her slim body on the shore! . . . And besides, if she had never come to Palestine, she would still be living in Kensington and attending all the services at St. Anselm's ; she would still be in that queer phase of her evolution!

All these thoughts, packed with youthful egoism and youthful desires, were wildly battling for supremacy in Patricia's mind while Peter and Daubigny talked interestedly and eagerly together about the great Ruthenberg Scheme on which the latter was engaged.

How amazingly quickly, she thought, two men, strangers to each other, can strike up a friendly acquaintance over some practical topic of conversation. How did Peter understand so

much about this scheme? Men seemed to absorb knowledge of that sort through the pores of their skin!

"You find such strange incongruities here," Francis Daubigny said. "Oil-power in Tiberias, for instance, partly worked by the river Jordan, which the world has always connected with John the Baptist, and which is to this day a sort of baptismal font for the Christians of all countries and denominations. Hundreds and hundreds of Christian babies are baptised every year in all parts of the world with water taken from the very spot where Jesus was baptised. It is a great pilgrimage place, and has always been a source of trouble. It's brought so many Christians together in Galilee that the Moslems, not to be outdone, saw fit to get up a religious festival of some sort, at the same time as the great annual pilgrimages, so that the Christian element should not outnumber the Moslems. It has become a source of danger, for there is always danger where there is great religious fervour—holy hate engenders fighting."

Peter became abstracted. The practical use of the water power of Palestine was losing itself in visions—strange visions, of an extraordinarily mixed character—which Daubigny's words had called up.

"Of course to Western ears it must sound odd," Daubigny went on, "this connecting of the baptismal Jordan with the new oil-power station, but no one would be better pleased than the Galilean if He could see what it means to-day to the poor of His country—what water means to all Palestine. And the East has always been the land of extremes—that is part of its fascination. You are disgusted one moment and enchanted the next. They are the cleanest and the filthiest of people, the most loyal to a religious cause, and yet disloyal in so many things that we consider essential to our moral code of honour."

Peter nodded. "Isn't it amazing," he said, "how many wonderful things have been hidden from us, from the finest scientific brains, until the need of them seemed greatest? If the world had been given all these things at one time, if we'd known about them always, we should never have used them properly and economically. The world would be bankrupt to-day."

Patricia looked quickly at Peter. This was not his customary way of speaking. His voice, more than his words, suggested that he believed a judicious Father's hand to be in control of these things, allowing His children to discover them one by one as need arose. Peter's words hadn't suggested "the controlling Power," or "the Great Cause." No, they suggested rather that Plan and Invention and Purpose were an indissoluble part of the

Creator's magnificent scheme, of His far-seeing loving-kindness.

Peter caught her quick look. How far he had travelled in his understanding during the last twenty-four hours! No wonder Patricia was puzzled. . . . He became nervous, and stopped short.

It was the Anglo-Arab who answered him. "I suppose you're right," he said. "The reservoir of Nature's secrets which has been jealously guarded and carefully stored up for us lets its treasures out one at a time, and now and then, to help on the progress of mankind and to stimulate man's energies. And yet I often wonder—I often ask myself if the world is any happier and spiritually better for all these discoveries, this scientific handling of the water for irrigation, for instance." He paused, and seemed to be thinking over the reasons why he wondered. "I always remember what an old Chinese potentate said to me, when we were trying to get a concession out of him for the irrigation of a vast tract of land in his special province. When I explained to him the advantage of storing up the water of a river, instead of allowing it to overflow its banks, and only releasing it when it was most needed for irrigation, and urged him to consider what it would mean for the crowded and starving population, he said with unmoved dignity and politeness: 'But why interfere with Nature? Its way of managing these things has always been very successful, very far-seeing!'"

"What was Nature's way?" Patricia asked quickly.

"Oh, just allowing all the unnecessary and starving population to be drowned," answered Daubigny. "Instead of storing up the water, just allowing it to inundate the country—flood it—wash everybody and everything away. The old gentleman didn't seem to think he was saying anything dreadful. He thought he was telling me something we British didn't know! When I expressed my disappointment at his refusal, he said: 'But why should I give this concession, spend this vast amount of money, just to interfere with Nature's excellent methods?'—and truly I found it hard to answer him. I myself didn't see why these wretched people should want to live, or to be kept alive even. Look at it from a different angle. Get away from our Western standpoint, and you won't call the old chap so inhuman, after all."

"What happened in the end?" Peter asked eagerly.

"Well, I told him there was much in what he had said, when you took into account the wretched lives of the people both in China and in India; but had he, I asked him, ever enquired the reason why man had been given his intelligence, why all this wonderful scientific knowledge had been revealed to him? Might

it not be for the purpose of saving the lives and bettering the conditions of all these helpless sufferers? . . .”

“Good for you!” cried Patricia.

Daubigny smiled. “Well, considering my private doubts, I suppose it was not so bad,” he conceded.

“Did it get you the concession?” Peter said.

“Not a bit of it! There is nothing on earth more conservative than the mind of a Chinaman of the old régime, except the religious mind of the orthodox Jew. His tenacity of faith is one of the wonders of the world. But the old mandarin was like granite. He said he didn’t know much about these new methods, but he didn’t think England had solved the vexed question of her food supply, for he had heard that if all the food which came into Great Britain was suddenly cut off and she had to rely on what was in the country, there would not be enough food amongst her population for two months.”

They were silent. This was an ugly bite to digest. Their splendid isolation had its other angle of view.

“You have only to visit the Jewish Colony of Tel-Aviva,” Francis Daubigny said after a pause, “to see what irrigation can do for a country—the whole prosperity of Palestine, like that of Egypt, is summed up in those two syllables, water. But I must not go on talking about this interesting subject any longer,” he added, “for I have an accumulation of correspondence to attend to.”

His tone implied an apology for having interrupted a love-duet. Lovers had other and more interesting topics of conversation than even the oil-power in Palestine.

When he had left them, Patricia said impulsively:

“Peter, when I hear things like that, do you know what I wish I could do?—or rather”—she paused—“what I wish I really *wished* to do!” She laughed. “That’s frightfully mixed, isn’t it, but there is sense in it.”

Peter expected to hear her say that she wanted to go to Damascus or some other place further afield. Into disturbed Syria, perhaps. Women always wanted to do these things—give the people in authority more trouble than they had already, and that, surely, was sufficient. But Patricia’s wish was very far indeed from the visiting of forbidden districts.

“I would like to find some set of people—not cranks or sectarians of any sort, I’m sick of sects!—who worked together just for the general happiness and welfare of human beings. Individual human beings, not just a great big un-individual cause, not just humanity in bulk . . .”

"But there *is* such a body of people," Peter exclaimed. "They are doing wonderful work and they aren't cranks. Some of them have no definite beliefs. A friend of mine belongs to this 'Post-War Brothers Society,' as they call themselves. Their motto is 'Deeds not Words' and they are certainly living up to it, for they are working in the slums of Portsmouth and Southampton and in other towns in Hampshire."

"What do they do chiefly?" asked Patricia.

"Oh, they go out into the highways and hedges and they bring in the halt and the maimed. I've been to one of their meetings with my friend. They are wonderful. Splendid men speak at them. And every class of man belongs to the brotherhood; simply everyone, from the Admiral of the ship to the stoker, aristocrat and mechanic, are all on equal terms when they are working for humanity. . . . They don't live together in a community, of course—they are all busy men. My friend is commander of H.M.S. *Spitfire*, and a first-class sportsman into the bargain. But they do the job that comes along *when* it comes."

"Who first started the idea?" asked Patricia.

"A South African of British descent. He was the leader of a little group of men who after the war were anxious to do something for agonised humanity, and so seized upon the job nearest to hand. One man whom my friend knows well wheels out a blind man in a bath-chair. The poor chap would never get any fresh air if he didn't. Another teaches the blind to read braille."

"Why did you never tell me about all this before, Peter?"

"Oh, I don't know."

"You thought I wouldn't be interested, because it wasn't 'churchian,'" said Patricia. "Because it's just done for love of human beings, and not for the glorification of St. Anselm's. Was that it?"

"Oh no!" Peter spoke sincerely, ardently. "It was just because, although I was tremendously impressed by the work of the 'Post-War Brothers' at the time, it just passed out of my mind. I got wrapped up in my own affairs—I had my agricultural exams. on at the time. . . . I was an awful slacker, Pat. I just didn't care, it didn't seem to be in my line."

"Oh no, you weren't a slacker, Peter. We can't all be doing social welfare work." She sighed. "What a world it would be for the likes of me, if we did!"

"If we all did something there would be splendidly less to do," smiled Peter. "I was a beastly slacker."

Patricia did not notice that her lover said *I was*, yet the use of the past tense was significant of his new attitude towards life.

"Oh, I don't believe that! For there would always be the

poor. The Bible tells us so." She smiled. "They come to the top like scum on boiling jam. If you give to one beggar you soon find a dozen more at your door!"

"There might always be the dregs of humanity, the desperately poor, but there needn't be the slums," argued Peter. "Those would soon disappear if individually we all cared more for the individuals who have to live in them. If I hadn't satisfied myself with just giving what I could, jolly easily afford to part with, just hadn't let things alone—"

At last, Patricia noticed that Peter spoke in the past tense. He said: "If I hadn't satisfied myself," not "If I didn't satisfy." Her eyes had become beautifully earnest. She loved Peter to talk to her like this. She was emotionally stirred, anxious at the moment to do something with her life, something that mattered, like the things these post-war brothers did. Perhaps Peter and she might do it together when they were married. She sighed. How impossible it was to picture herself married to Peter!

"St. Francis knew that it was man that mattered, not men," she said gently. "Don't you think it was lovely of him to kiss the leper's hand? That was Christlike, if you like. Christ never did anything more beautiful, more tender, in my opinion."

Peter drew her to him.

"Pat," he said eagerly, "I know so little about St. Francis. I know he's in the air just now because the papers have been full of him." He spoke humbly. "But I never bothered to read anything much about him before, not seriously. From what I've gathered from the papers lately I just know that he suddenly found God—that from having been a fashionable young man and fond of recklessly gay society, he became the friend of the poor and the founder of the great Franciscan brotherhood. Are you shocked, does it show a dreadful depth of ignorance?"

"No, I shouldn't have known much more than that," Patricia said, interrupting him, "if it hadn't been for my church and Miss Cresswell—but you should read the 'Little Flowers' and some of the things his devoted disciples wrote about him." She spoke ardently. "He really wrote delicious things; he had such a gay heart, such a whimsical mind. He was never what you call 'pi.' But if I know more about St. Francis and what he wrote than you do, you know more about the Apostles and what they wrote. I never dreamt that you knew your Bible so well, Simon!"

"That's because I learned Bible history at school. All boys do, you know."

Patricia smiled. He was repeating Francis Daubigny's words of that afternoon.

"Well, it comes in very useful just now," she said. "You seem to know everything I've forgotten, and that's most of the Old Testament, except the chapters that are picked out for the Sunday lessons in church; but as the American girl said, 'I can't go through with it'—I mean its history isn't consecutive, just like selections from Shakespeare for each day in the year. Of course I love the Psalms."

"Boys are taught how to understand it as history, how to get at its sequence of events," Peter said, "but—" He stopped.

"Well?" Patricia said, "but what?"

"Oh well, it might just as well have been modern military history, which I hated, for all the beauty I saw in it, or that was ever pointed out to me as being in it. Of course the beautiful passages were not what mattered for the history exams, we ought to have got those in church, but—well, I don't know what other boys get out of school chapel services. I personally . . ." He shrugged his shoulders.

"Did you like Mr. Daubigny, Simon?" Patricia said suddenly. The conversation had brought him vividly before her thoughts, their long talk about the literary beauty of the Bible.

"Yes, immensely." Peter spoke with a quick appreciation of the man's personality. "I can quite well understand what you meant about him being a good companion. Stimulating, I should say." He paused. "Very individual. And I like your name for him. He is exactly like an Arab with a big dash of English blood in him. A fine-looking chap, physically. Awfully fit. Not an ounce of spare flesh."

Patricia was both pleased and vexed. She missed the jealous note she had almost but not quite expected. It was strange how in so short a time she had come to "not quite expect" it, not to look for the same old characteristics in Peter. It must have been obvious to him that Francis Daubigny was the sort of man women admire, or rather, to put it more truly, the sort of man they wish to be admired by; the sort of man who affects a woman's senses, if she is a woman at all and not a broomstick. But Peter wasn't the least bit afraid of that, apparently, not a tiny scrap jealous. . . . Patricia crushed back her annoyance. Why be nasty, when Peter had evidently meant to be sympathetic about her friend? She would, of course, have called him petty and churlish if he had been jealous. How beastly human nature was!

Patricia could be candid with herself, but her candour always came after, never before, her quick bursts of annoyance. On this occasion, however, she was wise. She let the subject drop, and they quickly passed into a peaceful enjoyment of the ex-

quisite night and of each other's society. For when they forgot they were lovers they were such excellent friends, such topping pals, and as pals they enjoyed the quiet and the mystic remoteness of that night-dark garden in Palestine. The still lake lay very near them, the hills guarding its sacredness as their sublime trust, the buried cities of Christ's day peopled the air with an invisible host.

When it was time to say good-night and go to bed, Patricia put her cool bare arms round Peter's neck and drew his face very close to hers. With her eyes like the lake reflecting the glittering stars gazing into his, she said gently :

"Simon, you do love me, don't you? Oh, you must love me, for I need you!" She clung to him. "I feel so alone, Peter!"

"My dear, my dear," Peter said anxiously, "why do you doubt me?"

"I don't know. How do doubts come? How does belief come?" Her voice broke. "I just do doubt, that's all I feel."

"Doubt what, Pat? Feel what? That I don't love you?"

"No—not quite that. But that—you don't need me." She shook her head. "No, you don't need me as you thought you did three days ago. You thought you needed me then. Your sudden passion for me has—" she shrugged her shoulders—"has as suddenly disappeared—lost itself in the old friendship—gone out of you. It's no longer in your kisses, it's gone out of your embrace. And oh, Peter, if you want to keep me, if you really and truly want me, you must love me dreadfully. Love me as if that—loving and being loved—was the one and only thing that mattered. Surely as engaged lovers at least we must enjoy that ecstasy, just for a little time experience the thing most worth experiencing!"

"Pat, darling, do I quite deserve all this?"

Peter's true self knew that he did. He knew that for the time being—he couldn't just tell how long it would last—he did not want Patricia, would like to be a free man. He would like to deal, quite by himself and resolutely, with himself, with this new revelation of himself. But how could he say so without hurting the girl he loved? . . . And he did love her! Though for the time being, it might be, without passion and without desire.

"No, no," Patricia said. "That's just it. You don't deserve it. It's not your fault. . . . If you had been—well, amusing yourself with someone else, discovering the allurements of a strange woman as compared with the staleness of your familiar friend, I might have blamed you. But you haven't. You've

been doing nothing—I mean, nothing that can account for . . . well—it's just——” She stopped. “ Oh, what's the use of talking about things which can never be explained ? ”

Ah ! Pat had just said what Peter would have liked to have said. How little a man really owned himself ! How feeble his efforts to dispel the atmosphere created by his super-self. He had really tried to be the passionate lover, and he had failed. He had kissed Patricia, as he thought, with a lover's kisses. He had held her, so he imagined, with a lover's arms, and she had snapped her fingers over his attempt, and told him the truth. Passion had gone out of him. Desire had deserted him. He was just her true friend.

“ You've been a darling, Peter,” the girl went on, “ you're just sweet to me, but that is because you are sorry for me. You know I'm lonely. . . . Oh, it's quite hopeless to try and tell you the difference there is in you—it's not discussable, only it's there. I can't deceive myself.”

She drew herself away from him. “ You see, Peter, I know I'm a fool, but, as Charles Hawtrey used to say, I'm not a damned fool ! ” She opened her vanity bag and touched her cheeks with her powder-puff—that modern substitute for the Victorian fan in moments of agitation. “ I didn't mean to make a scene to-night,” she said. “ Honestly, old thing, I didn't ! ”

“ You haven't made any scene, Pat. Don't let's call discussing things ' having scenes ' ! You have only made me feel”—he hesitated—“ beastly unworthy of you—a wretchedly poor lover,”

“ Oh, not wretchedly poor, Peter ! And I think it's probably because you were such a perfect friend that—well, I sometimes wonder if it wouldn't have been wiser to have let it rest at that. Haven't we spoilt a beautiful thing and made in its place a very poor one ? ”

He took both her hands in his. “ Do you want your freedom, Pat ? Don't be afraid to tell me. Are you regretting the promise you made to me in the Casa Nova ? Don't trust me so little as a lover when you always used to trust me so truly as a friend ! ”

Patricia's senses leapt at the word “ freedom.” All it suggested staggered her. Then swiftly came the reaction. If she were free, what then ? The Anglo-Arab had not known she was engaged, and yet he had shown her only too plainly that he did not mean to let their flirtation, or whatever it might be called, become anything more than a flirtation. If then she broke off her engagement to Peter she would find herself left—a bit of human flotsam which nobody really wanted. She would be duller than she had been. Her days had to be warmed by

love—by a man's need of her love. She knew herself for a fool, but that was the plain truth. Life without love was no life at all.

"No, Peter, no, don't say that!" She raised her pale face to his, and offered him her crimson lips. "I'm just a jealous fool, darling. Jealous of the new unknown something which seems to be keeping you from me. Taking the best of you, and leaving poor Patricia the only part she deserves!"

Peter's heart-beats had quickened, they were thumping and pounding in his breast.

"The new, unknown something!" Oh, how he would like to tell her, to explain the true reason of his distraction, to see if she would understand why he couldn't be the same when such an amazing thing had happened to him, ask her to ask herself if she would feel the same if the most wonderful thing that could happen to any human being had happened to her! He wanted to remind her that she had said: "I wonder how you will feel Palestine?"

"Good-night, Simon!" They were at Patricia's door.

"Good-night, dearest," Peter said.

Again their lips met.

"You quite forgot to be jealous of the Anglo-Arab, Simon!" She laughed. "You see, it's out, I had to get it off my chest."

He laughed too, but his eyes contradicted the sound.

"So I did," he said nervously. How completely he had forgotten! No wonder she was surprised.

"Well, good-night," she said decisively. "He knows now that we're engaged."

Patricia shut her door.

CHAPTER XXIII

WHEN the door was shut, Patricia sat down on her hard-seated little chair. Very much a pilgrim's chair it was. Very little indulgence to the flesh lurked in its rough string seat and its small straight back.

Oh, why was she so completely an orphan? Why hadn't she a mother or a sister or a brother to talk things over with? She had no one, no one at all!

Well—yes, there was Miss Cresswell, of course ! But Miss Cresswell—dear, ardent Miss Cresswell—if Patricia were to tell her one half of what she felt, she would look on her as a lost woman, an enormity in the flesh ! Of what good to a young girl was a woman like Miss Cresswell ? No earthly—certainly not about earthly things. And surely this new Patricia was a hopelessly earthly young person. . . .

She wanted Peter to love her—to love her fiercely and madly. And yet she knew that she did not really love him. She wanted that love from him just to prove if it would satisfy her hunger for another man's love. She wanted to be made love to because her desire to be loved had suddenly been awakened, and it made her grievously anxious to give. And this was perhaps because she had changed Jesus, the Divine Lover, into the Man Jesus, the Example, the Teacher ; because she had lost forever the Jesus she had always made into her lover. . . . Was that the sort of girl she had become ? Was that what Palestine had done for her ? Shown her how sensual her nature really was, how truly physical a thing her religion had been ?

She leant her head on her hands, covering her face. . . . She was awful ! Awful ! Did any other girls—good girls, as she had always supposed herself to be, as she was, she *was* !—want the things she wanted, hunger for affection as she did ?

But why was a girl made like that, a perfectly clean and delicate-minded girl ? She knew herself to be that, for there was not an ugly thought in her mind about love. What she wanted was just the perfect love which apparently no girl ever got—the sort of love which is called holy when it has the “ benefit of clergy ” ; without that “ benefit ”—well, she supposed it was called sinful. But was she wholly gross and bad because she wanted love ? Was she to be blamed because she wanted in her lover a quality of love which Peter seemed suddenly to be unable to give her ? Was it too dreadful to want just that—that purely physical response to her senses ?

Patricia rose from her chair, and in two minutes she had stepped out of her apology for clothing, flung the dropped clouds across her chair, and got into the gay pyjamas in which, with her short hair and general slimness, she looked like a boy. Then she adjusted her mosquito curtains, preparatory to slipping into bed.

After she found a handkerchief and put it in her pyjama pocket, she switched out the light. As she did so she said :

“ If something nice turns up that I want to do very much, I'm going to do it. I'm going to say ‘ damn ’ to the divine spark. I'm going to live before I die . . . I'm going to live

full-bloodedly and gloriously. . . . Live!" She stretched out her arms on that word "live" and then dropped them, because it was quite true what Francis Daubigny had said: "The divine spark won't let you alone. It may die down, but it bobs up again." She paused. "He said it was because, once your consciousness has been awakened, it's horribly difficult to let things alone, to put it to sleep again; not to care; to be like the Adonis of the *Helouan*." And with whom was she to live gloriously? With Peter?"

"No, no!" She brushed Peter aside with an air of decision. A voice within her suggested that there was only one man with whom she could live fully and gloriously, and that he would never do so at the expense of "damning" the divine spark in either of them. She frowned it silent. If he wouldn't—tant pis pour lui! There were plenty of others who would! He might be maddeningly, irritatingly attractive, but he wasn't the only pebble on the beach!

Patricia's objective mind had no sense of what the voice was urging, for her objective entity had not quite grasped the finest fibres of Francis Daubigny's character. Unlike Peter, his scepticism had never allowed him to let things alone. He did care—perhaps a saving grace! His words about the divine spark made her think of the great Russian novel in which the hero tried to damn his divine spark, tried to reach by physical indulgence and physical depravity the lowest depths of human degradation. He tried to drown in vice that spark of divinity in him which prevented him from thoroughly enjoying himself in the world he lived in—but the poor wretch never managed to reach that depth. He became despicable in men's eyes and in his own, and that was just the crux of the whole matter: he was still divine enough to despise himself. He saw the impossibility of treating as physical the things of the spirit, realised that he had no power to destroy the immortal.

And the Adonis, too—hadn't he said to her when speaking of life that he agreed with the ancient Greeks who said: "Better never to have been, but now that we are here let us make the best of it and enjoy ourselves"? Was he, too, just trying to drown the divine spark—did it occasionally damp his enjoyment of living? Well, if it did he was strong enough to defy it. He certainly did get the best out of life—or he seemed to.

Patricia opened her bedroom door. She must say good-bye to the night, to the stars, to the stillness. . . . "On such a night did pretty Jessica . . ." Yes, it was a God-made night for lovers—but why, oh why, in this Galilean garden was the flesh so alive, so insistent? Why did she think of those lines, why

hadn't she quoted some wholly unphysical text from the Bible—such as "God is Love"?

Her eyes searched the still lake, they lingered on its soft ascending hills. How soft nature was at night—how in tune with love!

So she stood, a very modern figure indeed, in her strange surroundings, as she waited at the half-open door lost in thoughts which swept back from herself to the Master Mind that so compellingly controlled all other minds in Galilee. They dealt with Him as a man—yet somehow that did not comfort her. She wanted something more . . . something closer, tenderer than a Teacher, a Reformer. . . . She threw out her arms to the night yearningly.

"Ah! if He was not just the Reformer! If He was really the Son of God! The Saviour of men, Who actually cared for each sparrow that fell to the ground, that pitying, loving Saviour Who knew all the secrets of her burning, wanting, seeking youth! If He really knew just what she knew about her own self, and still loved her! . . .

But her new self refused to accept this consoling idea. The words of Francis Daubigny came back to her, their talk of the afternoon in Capernaum, of Jesus of Galilee, the ardent Reformer who had set a hard task to mankind, to take up and carry on in His name; it wasn't sufficient to believe in Him to be saved. It was necessary to stand alone—depend on your own spiritual development—and it was ever so much harder to stand alone than to lean on the Cross. It was just like taking a crutch away from a lame man. Yes, it was hopelessly hard for anyone as weak as she was! . . .

And that was what Palestine had done for her—taken away her crutch, asked her to try and stand alone. And what help had it given her to help her to stand alone? . . . Oh, a "new consciousness," Francis Daubigny would tell her, "a newly awakened sense of her own spiritual responsibility." And—well what besides had Palestine done for her? . . .

She looked up at the stars. . . .

It had revealed something to her about herself which she still hoped that Jesus, if He was the true Divine Saviour Who cared for each sparrow that fell to the ground, would understand and not despise. . . .

As Patricia shut her door, her eyes caught the gleam of the white metal crucifix which hung on the wall opposite her bed.

How long ago it seemed, as she looked at it fixedly, since she had always thought of Jesus and visualised Him as the Crucified Saviour. She had scarcely ever visualised Him as a

young and healthy man. It had always been the Cross, the Cross, the Cross, and Christ Crucified. Why had she not thought more about His work His work, His work, and its true meaning, its practical message to mankind? But her religion had been so filled with the Eucharist and with Christ on the Cross. And surely, after all, His death was far less wonderful than His life! Bad as such a death was, it was the common death of His time for men who took up dangerous and seditious work against the State. He knew that. He knew it when he first began preaching His new ideals. But His life, His own individual life, wasn't it an agony? Didn't it mean giving up all that makes life sweet and worth living to a young man in the full vigour of His manhood? Didn't it mean that if He went on with His work, gave up His youth to it, He must deprive Himself of everything, even the understanding and the fellowship of His old companions? After He knew what all this agony meant, He could not have dreaded dying nearly so much as going on living. He must have seen Fear many, many times—the fear that He wouldn't be able to carry on, that all the material things of dear humanity would eventually prove too strong for Him; that he would in despair throw up the lost cause—be “the world's splendid failure.”

It was late before Patricia slept. She told herself that it was difficult to sleep in the mystic air of Galilee—she had not found that mystic air destructive to sleep the night before! It was difficult to sleep because it seemed to her that she was just beginning to live for the first time, to understand now why long ago people had said to her: “Life is so difficult . . .” while she had found it so dully easy then. She was discovering that it is not big tragedies but the human senses which make life difficult. And she had hoped to find a settled peace of mind and deeper spiritual tranquillity in Palestine, but . . . Well, instead of tranquillity, her mind seemed disturbed by a new tribulation which was not of the spirit. “Oh, where shall Wisdom be found?”

It was the voice of Francis Daubigny which said the words, for Patricia's ear had recaptured every inflection of his voice. He had asked the question, but he would himself have told her—he would have said quickly: “Nowhere—nowhere, just yet, Patricia, while your hot blood is flowing so fully and so freely, while your young body in all its flowering is governed by the laws of the body, while its physical functioning is so perfect.” He could have said to her, he would have said: “Nowhere is wisdom to be found for you, Patricia, because you are spiritually unawakened and a darling, and because mind affects mind just

as inexplicably and as greatly as body affects body, and you, Patricia, are always in my mind, you are what my mind is dealing with. And that is why, Patricia, this new tribulation is disturbing your world . . .”

CHAPTER XXIV

WHEN Patricia came down to breakfast the next morning, she found that Miss Cresswell had gone off for the day to Nazareth, and might not be back till late. As a matter of fact, she did not return to Tabagha that night, nor the following day, and Patricia was beginning to feel a little anxious when, on the third day after her visit to Capernaum, she received a note saying that Miss Cresswell had decided to go on to Mount Carmel, where she hoped the girl and her *fiancé* would join her. The driver of the motor which had taken the Anglo-Catholic pilgrims to Nazareth and on to Mount Carmel ought to have delivered the message on his return to the Hospice, but had forgotten to do so.

Patricia rather welcomed the idea of the change. Mount Carmel would be nice and fresh after the stuffy air of the lake. She was beginning to feel El Tabagha extremely relaxing, in spite of the fact that it was considered one of the healthiest and freshest places in the vicinity. And perhaps it would be good for Peter as well as for herself. It might rouse him!

She visualised their driving off again together through Galilee ; their drive to the Hospice instantly filmed itself before her eyes. She *had* enjoyed it ! Peter had been delightful. Would she enjoy this other journey as much ?

And . . . she took a deep breath . . . would she have to leave the Hospice without again seeing Francis Daubigny, who had gone away the day after that Capernaum incident—after that evening in the garden when he and Peter had met and she had told him that they were engaged. He had departed without leaving any message, but—he had not taken his luggage with him. Patricia, womanlike, had found out that fact. He had gone on business to Roshpinas, a big Jewish colony not far away, so one

of the servants told her. Business! Yes; but how conveniently this "business" had coincided with her announcement of her engagement.

So occupied was she with Miss Cresswell's note and her own thoughts, that Peter's "Good-morning" startled her.

"Oh, good-morning, Simon." Patricia held up the scrap of paper for him to see. "From Miss Cresswell. She's at Mount Carmel, in the Hospice of the Carmelite Monastery, and wants us to join her. She's secured two rooms for us. The air is glorious there, and the country exquisite. What do you say to it? Are you ready to get a move on?"

Peter's expression changed suddenly. Its satisfied look vanished completely.

"Don't you feel like going?" Patricia said disconsolately. How tiresome—yes, tiresome!—Peter was becoming! You never could count on him nowadays for anything. First Caper-naum, and now—Mount Carmel.

"Hadn't thought about it," he answered. "I really hadn't, Pat."

"But, Simon, you know we were to take in Mount Carmel on our way back to Jerusalem, and they won't keep my room for me at the Casa Nova very much longer. So many people want it, and we surely *must* see Mount Carmel. It's one of the most charming places in Palestine."

"Oh yes, of course! Well, I'll be ready whenever you like to fix things up. I just hated to think about leaving this place. Somehow it feels like home. . . ." He meant a spiritual home, but dared not say so.

"But it's awfully relaxing," said Patricia. "I never realised before how enervating low air could be—for even here, at El Tabagha, we are ever so much below sea-level. I don't suppose we ever before lived at so low a level, did we?"

"If you feel like that, darling, let's get a move on at once." Peter applied himself to his egg. "I'm perfectly willing to fall in with your plans. I said you were to be the Thomas Cook of the party, and so let it be."

Patricia's feelings were in a turmoil. Peter's lack of enthusiasm for Mount Carmel had annoyed her, and now that he professed himself perfectly ready to go, she was angrier still. If only he had definitely stood out against Miss Cresswell's suggestion there would be the certainty of her seeing Francis Daubigny again before she left El Tabagha.

"Of course I'll enjoy Mount Carmel, Pat," Peter went on, "so don't hesitate to fix things up in your own way. It's been wonderful here, hasn't it?"

"Yes," Patricia spoke abruptly. "You seem to love this stuffy spot!"

When Peter's eyes met hers they told her more than his brief last words had done.

They held that new, strange, mystic expression which had baffled her before now, and estranged him—distanced him from her. And he had always been so simple, so easily understood, so practical, the least moody person she had ever known.

"You can come back here afterwards, if you want to, but I'm afraid I must get on," she said casually. "I can only have my room in the Casa Nova for a week more, from the day before yesterday. So if we spend two or three nights at Mount Carmel—as I think we ought to, after this relaxing air—that will only leave me about two days before I shall have to turn out of the Casa Nova."

"I see . . ." Peter spoke abstractedly. . . . Yes, surely he would come back. Surely he could not leave this place for ever! It was his spiritual home. He had found himself in it—or at least discovered there his higher being.

"When I've finished out my week at the Casa Nova, I might come back here," Patricia's voice went on; "only it will be getting stuffier and stuffier every day. . . . You see, there is only a limited accommodation at the Casa Nova. It's really a hospice for religious pilgrims, so it's not fair to allow any of the paying guests to stay too long in it—it doesn't give the others a chance."

"I see . . ." Peter said again, laconically.

He hadn't felt it stuffy at El Tabagha. The rarefied atmosphere of his super-world was anything but stuffy. . . . He wasn't at all sure whether he wanted her to return! . . .

Further conversation about their plans was interrupted by the entrance of one of the other guests at the Hospice, the American Quakeress, who at once began talking to Peter; and a few moments later the door opened again, and Francis Daubigny came in, carrying a bundle of newspapers.

At the bottom of the two steps leading down to the floor of the room, he halted, looked at the trio, and then said:

"Good morning!"

Patricia looked up, possessed by a stupid and sudden shyness, wholly foreign to her, which held her tongue-tied while the others answered his greeting. Francis Daubigny noticed her embarrassment. . . . How deliciously young she was, he thought. What a complexity of charms displaced each other in her. What a mass of inconsistencies and femininity lay concealed beneath that boyish exterior!

But Peter had moved down the table, so as to allow him to sit between himself and Patricia. He could not do otherwise than avail himself of the courtesy.

"You were looking unusually serious when I came in," he said, turning to the girl. "Is this the trouble?" He pointed to the open letter before her. "Where can we find a place where letters will cease to trouble us and where the pen-weary can feel at rest?"

Patricia's eyes still looked straight in front of her, as they had done ever since her first shy, startled glance at him. They must not give her away, express her satisfaction that at least she would have the pleasure of saying good-bye to him. . . . Pleasure? Say, rather, the exquisite pain of parting!

"I often wonder," he said, "whether human beings, speaking generally, derive more pleasure or pain from the letters they receive."

"Oh, I don't get many letters," Patricia said quickly. "Very few, really, and none at all that pain me." She felt safe—the topic was helpful.

"Well, they bother you, perhaps? Give you work to do?"

She shook her head. "Not even those, or very few, if any. I leave all my business to my guardian. I think I told you I was singularly free from near relations. I'm quite a free-lance. I owe obedience to no man, and duty to no woman!" She had managed to get that in, anyway. He could make what he liked of her words, spoken a little defiantly.

But he only smiled. "Lucky you," he said. "Perhaps you don't know just how lucky you are. But—" he hesitated.

"But what?" Patricia's nerves having steadied themselves, she was able to speak and look with her usual calm assurance, almost impudence. For one thing, Peter and the American were evidently not listening; they had embarked upon a discussion of their own. So she said that "But what?" without any trace of embarrassment.

"Well, I was going to be personal, and ask you if your engagement hadn't rather cut out the free-lance business?"

Patricia's eyes looked straight into his, steadily for one moment, then nervously, beautifully betraying. Suddenly they dropped, unable to keep up their spirit of mock independence. . . . She was his, exquisitely his, as much his in spirit as though she were lying in his arms. Francis Daubigny cherished her.

"No." She hesitated. "I can't say it has, for Peter and I are quite modern. We aren't going to attempt to drag our souls into the bondage of matrimony. He recognises the necessity of treating his modern *fiancée* as a modern woman!"

"But has any woman really any modern ideas on the subject of the man she is in love with? Have any of us changed our feelings on that subject? We all look very much changed, the women especially—but honestly, beneath all this modernity which you call dress"—he touched her sheath of mauve crépe-de-chine—"do you think that your feelings are very different from those of the girls . . . well . . ." he paused, "let me see, how shall I express it? . . . girls who wore nightgowns instead of orange silk pyjamas . . .?"

. . . Patricia blushed, flamingly. When had he seen her? Last night or the night before? When had he returned? . . .

"And who thought 'Clarissa Harlow' too shocking to read, or at least to acknowledge having read?" he went on, enjoying her blush and evident confusion. "Don't you think that behind all this pose—speaking of yourself, for instance, as the Modern Girl who sleeps in pyjamas, barely clothes herself, smokes cigarettes, and drinks cocktails, and flouts the very idea of being shocked at a book or a play, who can enter into discussions about sex without turning a hair . . . don't you think that behind all that, she isn't very different essentially, as a girl, from the simpering miss of Jane Austen's day, who was taught to drop her eyelashes when she passed any man, and who went about fully clothed, down to her very hands? I very much doubt it myself, just as I very much doubt if we men have very greatly changed our inmost feelings about women. I think we are all, really, pretty much sultans at heart still—that is, when we really care about a woman."

Those last words vexed Patricia. Did he mean that Peter didn't care? She rushed to his defence—to her own defence.

"I don't suppose that human nature does change very much," she said rather stiffly. "We may know more than we did, but I suppose we feel just about the same as we ever did. We women of to-day are modern enough, anyhow, to pretend we like being free-lances. . . . Peter is, I suppose, keeping his primitive sultan touch for the harem, but for the present he sees fit to allow me to do just what I like . . . he isn't such a fool as not to!"

"And that reminds me," Francis Daubigny said, "that I feel I must really congratulate you—no conventional stunt this time—for may I be personal enough to say I took a great liking to your *fiancé*—"

. . . Patricia's *fiancé* was still absorbed in the society of the young American Quakeress from Beirut and had no idea that he was being thus frankly discussed! . . .

Francis Daubigny spoke sincerely. He was anxious to make this girl see how lucky she was, make her realise what a charming young man her *fiancé* was. He felt it to be a point of honour on his part, because of his growing certainty that Patricia was allowing herself to care more for himself than for Peter Armitage.

"He seems to be one of the very best," he said cheerfully, "and I see little likelihood of the primitive man in him—the 'sultan' we are speaking about—overstepping the nice point of discretion. You won't find that you've exchanged your freedom for the high walls of the harem!"

Patricia was sorely annoyed. This man's casual treatment of that crucial fact of her engagement maddened her, made her at once more desperately in love with him and wildly desirous of hitting him! How she did want to hit him! But her voice betrayed nothing of this seething riot of feelings within her, as she answered coolly enough: "Well, it didn't seem like that yesterday, did it?"

"No, it didn't," Daubigny assented quickly. "Very few men under the circumstances would have allowed me to have such an enjoyable day—quite a red-letter day—almost eight hours of your company all to myself!"

Patricia was silent. Was he being cynically beastly, or was he defending himself by an assumption of indifference? She did not imagine that he was intentionally trying to hurt her—turn her affection from himself to her more worthy *fiancé*. Nor did she know that the effort belonged to one of the intervals when he didn't "let things alone" . . . to one of the flarings-up of the pleasure-destroying spark, the divine man.

Patricia's almost childish tone of wounded womanhood dashed water on the little spark, left little of it but smoking embers. She was such a really pathetic mixture of modernity and dependence, so exquisitely in need of love!

"If he had objected to your going, would you have stayed in Tabagha that day?"

Patricia raised her eyes. She meant to hurt him with them, but instead they caressed him. . . . There was silence. That expression in her glorious eyes—that caress—did hurt, all the same. Made the man curse his own stupidity, his weakness in entering into such a personal conversation. . . .

Then he said quietly: "You would have gone to Capernaum just the same, and yet you feel annoyed because he didn't object, didn't try to prevent you, because he behaved as he no doubt thought a modern girl would expect and like him to behave. You . . ."

Patricia showed her impatience. He was intolerable!

She made a pretence of following Peter and the American girl, both of whom had just left the room—Peter on the pretext of packing. But Daubigny stopped her.

"No, wait a moment," he said, "let's put convention aside, you and I. Let us speak as man to woman, heart to heart, as the parsons say in the pulpit." His eyes said more than this. They said: "You know we have the right to. You know that although convention demands that we should behave as meek acquaintances, yet our real selves are very, very intimate, and our intimate selves must deal with the Truth, face the music."

Patricia felt herself weakening. He was so much the master of her senses; he made her feel, as she expressed it to herself, "like nothing on earth."

"Stay just while I say one thing to you, which I feel I must say before we part!" he urged.

Patricia folded her hands in mock submissiveness. She sat in demure silence, waiting. . . .

"I want to implore you," he said, "as one who has suffered, not to . . . not to bring wholly unnecessary suffering upon yourself. Why do it?"

Patricia's eyes flashed defiance. The wild-cat part of her was ready to leap, it was there, crouching. Francis Daubigny's eyes were in great danger of her claws, but he did not turn tail like the big Airedale of Peter's memory.

"In what way, pray?" she said coldly. The woman in her was furious. He had almost told her *not* to care for himself—that was what his cryptic words really meant.

"Don't allow yourself to overlook the splendid qualities of your *fiancé* because they are so familiar to you. They are worth a thousand times over all the qualities you may imagine he lacks. Don't let yourself spoil your life through wrong-headedness." He looked into her flaming eyes. "Wrong-headedness *is* one of your failings—and in a young girl it's forgivable; in a woman, damnable."

"Oh, oh!" she cried. "I'd like to kill you! How dare you speak to me like that! You scarcely know me. You've no right to say such things!"

He caught both her hands in his, and stared straight back into her flashing eyes, tearing at her very soul.

"Now," he said, "tell me that lie again!"

Patricia's cat-eyes suddenly changed, and ceased to glare like green lamps, became humanly ashamed, and dropped.

Francis Daubigny freed her hands instantly.

"I don't know what you are accusing me of," she said, but her manner, too, had changed, had undergone a swift transfor-

mation. She spoke angrily, to save her face, but the characteristics of the leaping wild-cat had disappeared.

"You say that, but you know you don't mean it," Daubigny said gently, "and you also know perfectly well that I know you don't. You are quite aware of what my accusation, as you call it, is." He tried to speak with as little tenderness and emotion as possible, for he was much more afraid of those human eyes than he had been of the wild-cat glare of a moment before. The gently chilly accents cut her like hailstones.

"Oh, I hate you!" she cried again. "You really are the limit. Just too, too impertinent!"

Her anger was quickly returning. He was being too detestably cruel!

"Patricia . . ." It was the first time he had called her by her name. It startled her. Her own name spoken in his voice ran through her being like chords of organ music. . . . "For both our sakes, don't let the she-devil in you triumph. There is a big bit of the angel in you; for both our sakes, and for Peter's, stamp on the she-devil, develop the angel, the divine spark!"

He had caught her hands again in his, but quickly dropped them.

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" he said, "I am many years older than you, and hundreds of years older in experience. Don't throw away the substance for the shadow. Don't, as I said before, spoil your young life through wrong-headedness!"

"Oh, go!" Patricia said. "Please go—you've said enough, insulted me enough! I never want to see you again, never! I've never hated anyone as I hate you!"

"I am going, Patricia—this is our good bye. And believe me when I tell you that if I had met your Peter, as your future husband, when I first met you . . . if I had even known that you were engaged . . . I would never have—" He stopped. "Oh, God, would I . . . am I speaking the truth?" He turned from her swiftly, rose from his seat, and going to the door, stood on the topmost of the two raised steps, looking back. . . .

Patricia put her hands before her face. She bent her head. The room was in complete silence, deserted but for that cowering figure, that youthful, lonely figure.

He hesitated . . . very nearly turned back and came down again. Very, very nearly crossed the floor space and stood behind the quivering girl, folded her loveliness in his arms. Very, very nearly—that was all. . . .

A door closed decisively. The sound roused Patricia, drew her hands away from her face. She turned quickly and apprehensively, like a startled animal. . . .

He had gone ! He had left her ! Gone for ever. This had been their good-bye !

After a few moments spent in passionate silence and desolate rage, she pushed back her chair from the table, and slipped further down on its seat, so far, indeed, that her head rested on the last back rail. Instinctively she stretched out her legs to their fine, slim length, and stayed like that for some minutes—in a thick silence even more bitter than the last. Then :

“ That’s that, Patricia Paget ! ” she said.

Silence again. In the Hospice breakfast-room nothing disturbed her sense of desolation. Patricia could hear her own heart beating. Even the flies seemed still. Surely there never was such silence as this of Galilee ! . . .

She put her hands behind her head, and looked straight up into the roof, and spoke to it, questioned it, as if she were addressing some unseen presence hidden up there behind it.

“ Oh, why is life so damnably cussed ? Tell me that ! Why does any woman want a man whom she hates to love her ? ”

Patricia was consumed with hate for Francis Daubigny at that moment, and imagined that she hated him for ever. But then she was, as he told himself, when he shut the door between them, deliciously and consistently inconsistent.

CHAPTER XXV

PATRICIA had not been very far wrong when she had said that Peter would find Mount Carmel one of the most delightful places in Palestine. But why speak of Mount Carmel as if it consisted of one high mountain, when it is really a long, limestone ridge of about fourteen miles in length, running from the south-east to the north-west ? It is the only big promontory on the low portion of Palestine, and at its highest it never reaches two thousand feet. At the point where the Carmelite monastery stands it is only five hundred feet above sea-level, but to the traveller from Tiberias it is like reaching the top of the Alps after the heat and airlessness of the summer plains. How delicious Patricia found it on that late evening in spring !

One legend tells us that Elijah founded the order of the

Carmelites ; another ascribes it to the Blessed Virgin herself—hence the name “Our Lady of Mount Carmel.” Be that as it may, there seemed to Patricia, as there has seemed to so many other travellers, something much less Biblical, less characteristically “Palestine,” about Mount Carmel. The New Testament note seemed to be missing, because the environment of the Hospice was much more reminiscent of Italy. Was it because of the nearness of the blue waters of the Mediterranean ? Snow-capped Hermon might very well be Mount Etna—which Patricia had not seen ! Or was it the general greenness and the wealth of vegetation on this long spur of well-watered country that favoured the illusion ?

Carmel means “orchard,” and to Patricia’s eyes the entire country was an orchard, or rather a garden with trees in it. Here she saw again olive trees and walnut trees, big bay trees, pines, and holm oaks—and across the stretch of blue water the snow-crown of Mount Hermon, rising loftily above the purple softness of its sloping foothills. Truly a splendid setting for that wonderful scene in the world’s greatest drama—the Transfiguration.

But Patricia did not think of that. She had, as it were, suddenly stepped out of the Holy Land, and was taking a holiday from holy sites. She was, it is true, living in the guest-house of a monastery, but she seldom saw any of the monks. She might very well have been living in some old palace, turned into a pension, in a mountain town of Italy.

She had read all about Mount Carmel, all her guide-book could tell her. She knew that it was extremely sacred both to Jew and to Gentile ; but that did not matter to her. Its atmosphere was not Biblical, and it was rather a relief. It was just a place where she could enjoy herself . . . where for two days she had persuaded herself that she had been happy and had enjoyed herself . . . wandering about the flower-bright land, drawing in deep breaths of delicious air that seemed like iced champagne after the closeness of Tiberias. She had wandered about with Peter. Well, had she been happier with him than when she had been alone ? Perhaps not—but she had grudged him his long hours with one of the brothers or with the students of the seminary ; the monastery was a theological college, and Peter had evidently found it extremely interesting to discuss all sorts of subjects with the students. There were three or four Englishmen amongst them, and indeed a strange mixture of nationalities. How odd it was that Palestine had developed such wholly unexpected characteristics in Peter that he should enjoy the company of these students of theology.

No, Patricia did not want Peter with her all day long, and she had seen a good deal of Miss Cresswell. More than once she had gone with her to Haifa, and she had heard a great deal from her about her experiences with the Anglo-Catholic pilgrims. The dear old thing hadn't bothered her a bit; indeed, Patricia had been quite thankful to accept her offers of companionship; her ceaseless chatter kept Patricia's own thoughts from troubling her.

And so the time had passed in the big Carmelite house, so venerable in tradition and suffering, so many times destroyed and rebuilt.

It was a part of the great Catholic Church. Patricia couldn't help feeling that, but somehow or other it had little to do with what she had felt at El Tabagha. There were no ghosts in Mount Carmel. Elijah, if he haunted the place for the Jews, left it alone for her! And there was no breath of Jesus. Here, up in the glittering height of the monastery, she felt relieved in a measure, less oppressed by the sense of her own materialism. She was, she believed, far too sensual and materialistic for Galilee. She was really glad to get away from it, to get back to the more everyday world. The ghosts of Galilee wouldn't let you feel comfortably human. If you did, you soon found yourself ashamed of your own humanity. Someone had said to her when she was in Jerusalem: "Oh, you know, you can get sick of doing holy sites, just as soon as you can get sick of doing anything else," and—well, for almost a month she had been doing holy sites. . . . This was not what she had felt about the Sea of Galilee before the arrival of Francis Daubigny; she had forgotten that.

Patricia was hanging her head out of a high window—she loved looking down on the world from high windows, was as fond of a pillow on a window-sill as any Italian of them all—and she was now gazing down lovingly at the scene before her. Right across the white road on the green promontory lay the domed tomb of Abi-sa-Fendi, the great Persian Reformer, the apostle and follower of the still greater Persian Reformer the Bab, the founder of the sect of the Babi. He died a martyr's cruel death. His new religion was a curious mixture of Mohammedanism, Christianity, Judaism and Parseeism. He taught that all beings emanate from one Deity, by whom they will ultimately be absorbed.

Patricia's eyes drank in the beauty of the scene, the white dome on the green land, the Mohammedan fort which raised its white tower, now a lighthouse, above the blue sea far beneath it.

She thought of the peace which the holy man must at last have found in that quiet resting-place. How glad he must have been to be at rest ! In his life he had urged a dangerous creed. Unlike the Prophet Mohammed, he had enjoined few prayers. Instead he had insisted upon charity, hospitality—and monogamy. One wife—no concubines—no divorce. He discouraged asceticism, so beloved of the fanatical sects of the Mohammedans, and he actually tried to abolish the veil for Moslem women, and allow them an equal share with their husbands of the intercourse of daily life.

"Brave Abi-sa-Fendi," Patricia murmured, "and braver still, the Bab."

She watched a party of Mohammedans approach the white-domed tomb, veiled women with their turbaned lords—no true disciples, any of them !

"Bravo, Bab !" Patricia said again. "Just imagine his daring to attack the sacred Mohammedan institutions, telling the Moslems that all those five daily prayers, all their offerings to the saints, all their obedience to the Koran, counted as nothing if the divine spirit of man was not in them. Trying to win greater freedom for the poor veiled women. Daring to do all that in those far-off days, long, long before Young Turkey showed its fez-less head and tried to abolish the veil."

Her eyes went again to those shrouded figures. Turkey, she thought, was finding it harder to knock down the institutions and traditions of its women than of its men. Women were tenacious creatures ; the veil would no doubt long outlive the fez.

Well, she was thankful that the Bab had not apparently been very successful in Palestine, although the tomb of his apostle lay straight in front of her, for the East would no longer be the East if there were no veiled women to suggest mystery and charm, no five-fold prayers to call the devout to their "seggâdeh" each day !

Suddenly Patricia started. A rush of hot blood tore through her veins. Who was that coming towards the saint's tomb from the glittering sea ?

Her senses knew long before her eyes were certain who it was. Knew with conviction that it was the only man in the world that mattered. Amongst all the millions of human beings, he was the one who counted. The rest were just population—he was the man !

She forgot that she had done her best to forget him, had almost persuaded herself that she hated him, had really almost succeeded, by force of will, in banishing him from her thoughts

—had banished him sufficiently to enable her to enjoy herself at Mount Carmel. Yes, she really had enjoyed it all! And now, what? Would her peace and enjoyment be wrecked again?

With clasped hands and quickly beating heart she stood there at her window, watching the Anglo-Arab approach the tomb. . . . What had brought him there? She had certainly not told him of her projected visit to the Carmelite monastery, but—had he perhaps ferreted out the information, as she herself had done with regard to his movements? Had he followed her—or was it mere chance?

Breathlessly she watched him, all her anger and her pride forgotten, swept away like desert dust before the wind of her fear that he would not see her—would not look up to her high window—that he would pass on his way without so much as a glance!

He was probably on his way to Haifa, and had just stopped for a moment to drink in the oxygen of this airy place, to enjoy its calm green beauty, its blue, sunlit waters.

She waited, conscious of nothing else, seeing nothing else but the tall, lean figure coming nearer and nearer to the white road which divided the green promontory from the Hospice.

If he saw her—if she could will him to see her—would he come up and speak to her?

Patricia concentrated her mind and her will on the moving figure. He must look up, must see her. She was willing him to do so!

He stooped to look at a lemon-coloured scabious—then he walked on more quickly to the high road. He had passed the saint's tomb without looking at it, he had seen it before. . . . Patricia's heart seemed to beat in unison with his walking. . . .

When he reached the road, he paused and looked up, as if to admire a stone balcony—a kind of outside pulpit—which projected from one of the monastery windows. Great crowds had been addressed from it, great personalities had stood on it. But Patricia's window was higher up, as high as her Casa Nova eyrie, flush with the perpendicular wall. Would he lift his eyes to it, and find there an even more interesting object than the little pulpit?

She watched him with increasing anxiety. Would his eyes drop when he had looked his fill at the pulpit? Could she will them to look up higher? . . .

She had failed. Francis Daubigny walked on.

Patricia's heart roiled out one deep, disappointed sigh, while her eyes followed him. Suddenly she held her breath. She was still willing him—willing him to turn . . . he did turn . . .

he stopped . . . he was looking up. Looking up at her window !

She saw him start. Then their senses met. The ether vibrated with their sex-messages. Patricia was scarcely conscious. Her whole being was held in suspense. . . .

The suspense became so great that she thrust her head far out of the window to see what he was doing.

Had he passed the Hospice on the near side of the road—hugged the wall of it, so that she should not see him ? . . .

Yes ! He was walking with determined steps right under the shadow of her high wall . . . he had almost passed the length of the building, whose entrance was in its very centre—he was far beyond the door . . . then again he stopped, swung round, and walked deliberately back to it—disappearing under its lofty arch.

Patricia drew back from the window, listened, held her hands clasped to her breast. She had willed him to come to her and he was coming, coming to speak to her. He was going to stand beside her.

Oh, how she was living, living ! Life was glorious.

A sound caught her listening ears. Someone was speaking. Yes, two people were talking as they walked along the stone passage. They were coming nearer and nearer to the door of the public sitting-room which communicated with her own room. She darted into the sitting-room. Its window ran flush with her own.

Again she stood and listened. . . . Yes, the footsteps had stopped behind the door on to the corridor. . . .

It opened.

Patricia turned from the window. He was in the room.

Neither of them spoke. All her tumult of sensations, all her intoxication of *his* senses, would probably end in nothing. Nothing at all but some broken sentences and a few conventional platitudes.

Then Francis Daubigny came slowly to the window and stood beside her.

For the moment that was sufficient. They were together. If he went away without saying a word, he would have revealed by his coming all the dear and wonderful things that the Earthly Paradise contains. That was what mattered. He had come ! They *were* together. Oh, heavenly communication of the senses ! Oh, glorious needlessness of destructive words !

Silently they turned and faced the view.

Presently, no doubt, they would begin talking about its beauty . . . begin asking each other " how they did," and how long they were going to stay in the Hospice . . . useless and futile things

like that. But what did these things matter—what did anything matter? Their senses had confessed, they had spoken gloriously, they were loving gloriously! . . .

“I tried *not* to come, Patricia.”

She laughed. As rich a chord of triumph, that laugh, as Deborah’s Song. When Patricia’s passions were stirred her voice showed it, it became richer, huskier, and at the same time more vibrant; just as a fine actress’s voice becomes richer and fuller with the heightening of her emotions, so did Patricia’s.

To his confession she answered: “I saw you.”

“Your eyes drew me back,” he told her. “Otherwise why did I look back and up?”

He had opposed her welcoming hands, but this rejection thrilled Patricia far more than any taking of them could have done. She held them out again. And this time he took them.

“The woman tempted you?” She smiled again, all love and passion.

“Don’t you despise me, so weak a man?”

“No, not at all,” she said. “It would have been very rude if you hadn’t come. You ought to have come and greatly apologised!”

Patricia was talking for talking’s sake, because nothing very much mattered while her hands were almost crushed to nothing in his—in those sunburnt, long-fingered “Arab” hands which were a part of the man she adored. Oh, how she adored him!

He dropped their slim, temperamental beauty.

“Don’t talk rubbish!” He tried to speak harshly. “What I told you the other day was the truth. This evening I have behaved like a fool. Where is Peter?”

“Peter?” Patricia spoke vaguely, as if Peter and what he was doing had nothing to do with what they were doing. “Oh, I think he’s gone for a walk with one of the theological students, an Englishman whom he has chummed up with tremendously. Or—he may be writing. I really don’t know.” She spoke casually. Francis Daubigny’s eyes questioned her.

It was always easier to speak through the language of the senses with Patricia than to express things in words. She was keenly sensitive to telepathy.

“Yes,” she said, “I’ve been quite good. Very nice to him!” To herself she added: “Well, he shall get what he’s asking for.”

She saw him wince. A lover’s “niceness”—he knew what that meant. And he had had none of it. He had denied him-

self the sweetness of these loving, taunting, scorning and tender lips.

"I am very glad," he said gravely.

"Funny man!" Patricia laughed. Her eyes taunted him. She was being damnable naughty.

"You deserve to be slapped!" he said.

Patricia turned from the window.

"Perhaps you'd like to do it?" she said. "But why all these airs of Arthurian virtue? Why come up here, if you won't allow yourself to—" She changed her sentence. "Why on earth allow yourself to suffer in a world like this, I'd like to know. It isn't good enough! I mean to get the best I can out of it, and blow the—"

He interrupted her. "Don't be cheaply cynical. You know you're only posing."

"And you're only being rude again!" she retorted hotly. "We do nothing but wrangle and quarrel. Why did you come up? Why on earth did you?"

"Oh, Patricia," he said, "you are so young, so dearly foolish, and so exasperatingly wrong-headed!"

"Yes, as you said before, more than half she-devil!"

Her anger had faded, the tenderness of his voice had made her exquisitely submissive.

"But don't let's quarrel. Take me out, and let us watch the sun drop behind the sea from the top of the lighthouse fort. I love to see it go down, down, down, and then suddenly drop out, the last little light drop behind the cold blue sea, the day give in to night—suddenly, abruptly."

They went out together, and during the moments of Nature's most mysterious hour they sat together, the "she-devil" and the "Anglo-Arab," silently content with each other's nearness. They were happy. Lovers forbidden to each other—and who can deny the super-quality of forbidden fruit?—more forbidden to her than Patricia at the moment imagined.

The sublime beauty of the scene and of the hour put a ~~ban~~ on talking. Sincere and true talking there could not be between them, and anything less than truth and sincerity was out of place, out of keeping with the drama of Nature, overshadowed as it was by the Mount of Transfiguration.

Not for one moment during the time they spent on the top of the high white fortress did they make love to each other by spoken word or by action, but they made love to each other all the same by that silent denying which gives all things that are forbidden.

When they got back to the monastery, Peter met them at the door. He had heard of Francis Daubigny's arrival on his return from his long tramp over the whole of the Carmel ridge with the English student whom Patricia had mentioned to Francis Daubigny.

Peter was radiant. He seemed to emit radiance as a luminous cross might do in the dark, and again Patricia was mystified. She wondered if Daubigny noticed it. He and Peter seemed uncommonly glad to see each other, anyway. She left them chatting while she ran to her room and changed for dinner. Then she joined them in the big empty dining-room, where they were the only guests, all the pilgrims having gone for the moment, including Miss Cresswell. They had been spending the day at Acre and had not yet returned.

As Patricia looked across at Daubigny, standing waiting for her with Peter beside him, she was again struck with the strangeness of his life. Such a mixture of interests. His familiarity with pilgrim hospices and the hospitality of monks, his knowledge of Bible names and Eastern languages on one side, and on the other an equal familiarity with such modern matters as motor-cars, electric light, telephones—all coupled with an intimate knowledge of the present position of tension between Moslems and Jews—the fanaticism of the one and the industry of the other.

They sat down to table, and after dinner, while they were drinking their coffee, one of the Brothers came in to pay them a visit. He was an Englishman of magnificent physique, and a fine classical scholar. He certainly showed no signs of having suffered from the restrictions of his strict order.

"Not that we are nearly so strict as the members of the other house, belonging to our order, about fourteen miles further along the ridge," he said, in answer to Patricia, who had expressed her surprise and sincere regret that the rule of the house did not permit of his joining them at dinner on the following evening, to enjoy some of the excellent fare provided for the visitors.

"What on earth do you eat?" she asked.

"Well, whatever it is," he answered, "it must be full of vitamines and extremely wholesome, for I don't look starved, do I?" He smiled good-humouredly. "Our garden is well stocked, and we have and enjoy green food all the year round here."

"Oh, I don't know how you can do it," she said admiringly. "And how do these boys stand it? So cut off from the outer world, and from sport, I suppose."

Again he smiled. "Well, all I can tell you is that very, very

rarely do any of the students who come here leave us at the end of the three years' course. But there is a break at the end of the third year, and I can assure you that no sort of coercion is used to make them stay. And again, if they do want to go, there is a final opportunity for them to do so at the end of the seventh year—when they can go back to the world." He paused. "But they never want to leave this beautiful life," he concluded simply.

He was such a splendid specimen of manhood, with such a human twinkle in his eye, so evidently one who loved life and humanity, who saw in them more humour and happiness than tragedy and sorrow, that Patricia looked at him in amazement. Then her eyes sought Peter's. She expected to find in them the same surprise and admiration that she herself was feeling—surprise that any man so splendidly virile could call the life of a Carmelite monk so beautiful that no young man wanted to leave it! But Peter's eyes expressed no surprise, only a glowing interest which permeated his whole personality. He was alight with what seemed to Patricia spiritual understanding and sympathy for the idea.

This was the new Peter, the Peter which Palestine had given her. Did he remember what he had said in the Casa Nova about Father Tommaso? The old Peter could never have seen anything but pathetic folly in a man like their host mortifying the magnificent body which it was his good fortune to possess—not that it looked mortified!—and renouncing all the things of the world that, for the old Peter, had made life worth living. But, looking at this new Peter, the old Simon seemed a thing of the past. The new Peter didn't seem to think that this intellectually gifted man was wasting his abilities. Then the conversation drifted on to the history of the monastery, and to the life-story of its founder.

Over and over again it had been destroyed, and over and over again rebuilt and restored, for nothing daunted the courage of the Carmelite Fathers.

Napoleon was one of its many ghosts, for he had used the monastery as a hospital for his troops. When he was forced to abandon it, he had to abandon also his sick and wounded, leaving them to the mercy of the Turks, who fell upon them and butchered them ruthlessly.

"Of course," the monk added quickly, "to be fair to the enemy, one must admit that it was no more brutal of them to put to death these units of a dangerous invading army than it was for Elijah's followers to murder the prophets and priests of Baal."

He smiled, and then said with a profound sigh :

" And again in the Great War our poor Mother-house suffered terribly. It has only just been repaired. . . . Alas, what that war has done for Christianity—made us a scorn and a mockery to unbelievers ! "



CHAPTER XXVI

PETER had welcomed Francis Daubigny's appearance, because having him with them would make things easier for himself and Patricia—or so he thought. . . . He, too, had found Mount Carmel enjoyable and beneficial. The fresher air had undoubtedly helped him, made it easier for him to take up his normal-life again. He had felt more able to exercise sufficient self-control, to appear less self-centred. Here, in healthy Carmel, he was accepting his Galilean experiences as something which he knew he could never explain, even to himself. If it was delusion, or imagination, or any of the other things which materialists might label it, if it was not real, it still remained to him the realest thing that had ever happened to him. It was the form of his spiritual awakening chosen for him by the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier. Even were it the work of his own imagination, he was now firmly convinced of its reality. . . .

But there is a time and a place for all things. With his *fiancée* on Mount Carmel it was the time and the place for him to devote himself to her pleasure, the time and the place for a lover to behave as a lover !

If he had not been engaged to her, if he had owed her no consideration, he would, he knew, have left her. He would have sought and found, he knew not where, the thing he most needed, and that was—solitude. He did so urgently need it. He wanted days and days of absolutely undisturbed peace, of remoteness from the materialistic world. He wanted to find his soul in the desert. Yes, poor Peter, he wanted to find himself—he needed that solitude which would teach him how to live !

But he had honestly tried to do his duty as a lover ; he had given Patricia as much of his attention as she seemed to require

during the day, and had kept for himself the early mornings and the late hours of the afternoon and evening, during which he took long walks with the young student, when Patricia was tired or did not seem to want him with her. And he had spent many quiet hours in the monastery garden, whose loggia overlooked one of the most beautiful views in Carmel, if not in the world. Patricia too loved this hidden portion of the garden, and had often sat there with Peter. He had felt it disloyal to her that when she was there with him he had wanted to be alone ! Her beauty thrilled him ; her very affection for himself haunted him like a fear. . . . Married to Patricia, given by her in their married life all that such a short time ago he so much desired, what would he be able to make of his life ? He knew that his emotions, at present, were too spiritually excited and affected to feel his old passion for her, even while his fondness for her had in no way lessened. He knew that desire had deserted him, passion had ceased to thrill him—for the time being. But, as time went on, and the vividness of his experience in Galilee faded, would his old satisfaction in a purely materialistic enjoyment of life assert itself again ? Wouldn't the old Adam return ?

At the present moment, in the garden of the Carmelite monastery, with his eyes resting on the fair height of the Mount of Transfiguration, that old careless, *laissez-aller* life was not the one he wanted. He had no idea, as yet, how he was going to arrange his new life, in what way he was going to change it, but he wanted to change it somehow. Alone, unmarried, he would and could change it, but as Patricia's husband . . .

He ran his hands through his thick hair.

Patricia was such a queer mixture. So really fond of the world, and yet so emotionally religious—he used the word for want of a better. At one moment she would be ready and anxious to join the Post-war Brothers, at the next she was as truly pagan as any nymph of Olympus. Enjoyment of living—the very fulness of living—that was her creed, and all her religious emotion and her old churchianism had only been a means to that end. Spiritually she was, he knew, as unawakened as he himself had been a week ago. Dear, loving, lovely Patricia ! With money and youth and beauty and perfect health, all she wanted was just to live and to love gloriously ! To have a good time.

Peter sighed. Poor Patricia ! To live and to love gloriously had such a very different meaning for him now than it had for her. . . . To live gloriously must mean living for others. Loving gloriously meant loving humanity, and by so doing, loving Jesus. Walking in the way of light. . . . But Patricia would say that wasn't her idea of living gloriously ; that loving Jesus through

humanity was not the sort of love she could give. Her manner, if not her words, would tell him that. "I am human as well as spiritual," she would say. "You must surely satisfy the starving man before you try to feed his soul!" . . . And how true that was—how distressingly true! His own body would feel the human need of her again, he knew that—and there was no harm in that. But with her always beside him, as his companion and helpmate, would the body or the spirit triumph? Who could say?

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Under that loggia, hidden from the sight of men, gazing at the Mount of the Transfiguration, Peter sat silently wrestling with his soul. Was he strong enough to lead Patricia, or would she, in all the full flower of her loveliness, lead him? Would he forget that voice at dawn, or would he obey it? Would he remember that he had had his chance? Remember that now he knew? He was no longer blind, no longer able to "let things alone" . . . what was the expression the English student had used?—oh yes, "in a state of invincible ignorance." That loophole was now denied him. He would never again be able to say he didn't care, for now he believed. Yes, he believed because he had been given the grace of faith, the power to believe,—and he had lost the power to *disbelieve*. What then was he going to do? Obviously he could not go on in the old way. If he did, he would be sinning against the Holy Ghost, deliberately saying: "Evil be thou my good!"—and that without the hope or expectation that for him, too, the Rejected Saviour would say: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Invincible ignorance was no longer his. Was it a case of "Where ignorance is bliss 'twere folly to be wise"? . . . Oh Peter, was it?

Mount Carmel, with all its mysterious history, enfolded him. Upon the snows of Hermon a curtain of rosy light fell with dramatic suddenness, transfiguring their white purity with the magic of the setting sun. The day blue of the Mediterranean had become colder, the whole scene was less dazzling. From Our Lady of Mount Carmel came the Angelus, breaking the stillness with its sweet message, its Christian call to prayer. The sound of the bell travelled and echoed and travelled again; it touched every nerve in Peter's being.

Below, on the high road, two Arabs had just lifted their "seggâdeh" or prayer mats, for the Prophet would not have his followers commence their prayers at sunrise, nor exactly at noon or sunset, because, he said, infidels worshipped the sun

at such times. Their devotions at an end, the Arabs roused their waiting animals and went on their way.

Lean camels, burdened and bored, black donkeys, down-trodden and docile, half-clad Arabs, sun-blackened but comely; white birds circling in the air, disturbed by the clang of the Angelus bell; the evening scent of garden stocks, freezias and orange-blossom, unknown to the brighter hours of day, drifting up like a sweet silence. . . . And over all, a brooding, healing peace.

Peter was held as by some potent spell.

CHAPTER XXVII

IT was not until sunset hour that same evening that Patricia again saw Francis Daubigny, for his day had been spent at Haifa.

She had learnt previously how it was that he had appeared so unexpectedly on Mount Carmel the evening before. He had come to Haifa on business, and the heat of the city had driven him forth to seek a breath of fresh air on the heights. And, once there, he had found the air so enjoyable that he was tempted to stay there for a couple of nights, running down to Haifa during the day. . . . Thus his explanation *after* the event. Conscience-salve, of course, but with a modicum of truth in its composition.

And now they were sitting together again, watching the sun drop behind the horizon.

Ever since Patricia's burst of anger at her window the previous evening, they had managed, outwardly at least, to keep upon the calm level of friendship . . . and of course Daubigny's day in Haifa had helped enormously to this end. But there were moments of supreme temptation . . . as when Daubigny bent forward to give Patricia a light from his own cigarette. . . . Supreme temptation, with those lovely lips so close to his own.

He rose suddenly.

"Come," he said, almost roughly. "Don't let's make idiots of ourselves! To-morrow we say good-bye. Let us be sensible till then."

Patricia looked at him. "Sensible?" she scoffed, and shrugged her shoulders. "Why on earth should we be 'sensible'? . . . That horrid word!"

"Peter loves you," Daubigny said abruptly. "And he has trusted us, treated you as you *pretend* you want to be treated."

"Oh? Does he love me? Where is he now, then? Why isn't he with me instead of you? I'll tell you. He's talking, talking, talking—and arguing—with Mr. Ormsby, the English student. He *doesn't* want me! He's absolutely changed, indifferent—can't you see it?—and yet we've had no quarrel, we're good friends."

Daubigny made a little deprecating gesture. "Peter is interested in this religious life," he said. "And it is extremely interesting, Patricia, and this great monastery has an extraordinary charm. As Father Joseph said last night, its history is splendid. But the boy loves you all right—loves you fondly and fairly. He isn't . . ." He paused for a word. "I imagine Peter is much less animal in his nature than most men are. But you women . . . well, you profess to despise our sex as being in that way lower than yourselves, and yet when you get a man like Peter you . . ."

Patricia rose to her feet, interrupting him. He was being horrid again—trying to make her hate him! Silly fool! As if he could—and as if it would stop her loving him if she did hate him! If only he had been human to her, had said: "Peter can do without you and I can't!" If only he had even hinted that, with no Peter in the way, he would take her for his wife . . . but he didn't. He never said these things. He was behaving again like the plaster saint he was—for she had only to chip the plaster to reveal the primitive man like any other! . . . Well, she couldn't always be cheapening herself by chipping! . . . And he wasn't a bit the strong, stern man of fiction. He was just as human and as weak as she was, if he'd only acknowledge it, and lay aside this absurd pose. . . . He'd accused her of posing—pretending—what was he doing himself? And why? In Heaven's name, why?

There he was, stalking on in front of her—making a fine excuse of going to see Moses about the arrangements for their departure on the morrow! . . . And they were departing! They would be in Haifa or in Jerusalem by this time to-morrow. All three of them. They were to make the drive together. . . .

Patricia allowed him to get well ahead of her, her pride acting as a most efficient brake. But her thoughts were not so easily restrained as her feet. They flew to Peter—to their probable marriage—to the life ahead of her. . . . If Peter was

still talking to the English student? If he had really changed towards her. . . . Daubigny couldn't know anything about that, she thought angrily. He had never seen Peter *before* he came to Palestine—to Galilee—and yet he presumed to lecture her on Peter's love for her, on her duty to Peter! What about *her* love for himself—and his for her?

She had reached the door of the monastery and the question was still unanswered.

Going up the stairs to the guests' apartments, she had to pass the door of the chapel—it faced her as she entered the building. . . . How long ago it seemed since she would, instinctively, have gone in to say a little prayer! How very long since it would have helped her just to kneel there in front of the gilt Tabernacle, to find comfort and happiness in the Unseen Presence it concealed! . . . Well, she couldn't do that now, and—had it been her fault? . . .

She hurried on up the next few steps—then turned, and slowly went down again. . . .

CHAPTER XXVIII

QUIETLY Patricia pushed back the half-open door, and stepped inside the chapel.

It was in such shadow that even its size was obscured. She could see nothing of the interior but the fitful burning of the perpetual lights. She made her way cautiously up the aisle, and slipped into one of the chairs which faced the high altar, burying her face in her hands.

After a few moments she looked up. Some inner urge compelled her to do so, and drew her eyes, still unaccustomed to the gloom, towards the right. There a denser darkness marked a small side chapel, close beside her, near the altar of which hung an immense crucifix. Perhaps it was the flesh-like whiteness of the ivory figure of Christ that caught her eye, for it alone stood out clearly in the surrounding darkness.

It alone stood out. . . . But . . . now that her eyes were adjusting themselves to the gloom, they saw something more,

as they travelled down from the ivory Figure. Someone was kneeling at the foot of the Cross . . . a man, so lost in devotion, so prostrated there, that Patricia could make out nothing of him but his feet and the lower part of his body, patches of deeper black amid the shadows. . . .

Patricia averted her eyes hurriedly. One had no right to spy on another's devotions. But her mind harped on what she had glimpsed. Involuntarily her glance went back again to the side chapel. Who was this man? . . . Why was he kneeling there? . . .

Her power of vision was improving moment by moment. The bowed figure became clearer. . . . Patricia started.

Was it . . .? No, no, it wasn't—it couldn't be—but . . . yes, it was, it was Peter! Not Simon, not her "let things alone" Simon, but Peter, whom she had called Simon Peter in jest . . . Peter, as lost in his crucified Christ as any one of the devout Mohammedans they had watched at prayer is absorbed in Allah.

She felt herself shaking like one who has seen a ghost. She tried to quiet her heart, to calm herself and keep perfectly still—to make quite, quite sure that she was not mistaken. . . .

Yes—it certainly was Peter—her own doubting Simon. The man whom she had refused to marry because he did not believe. She recognised his boots, his plus-fours, his rough tweed coat. It was that very Peter who had called her a "churchian," who had often said to her that if the Church would think less about the Cross and Christ's death and more about the way He would have men live it, would be better. . . .

Her amazed eyes still watched his abject figure, kneeling there at the foot of the Cross—the crucifix which was, after all, the emblem of Christ's death for the salvation of mankind. . . . And Peter had always talked like Francis Daubigny, had seemed so sure of the fact that man's salvation came through man himself, through his own life and efforts. Was this bowed figure, this object of absolute surrender, the man who was so satisfied with that philosophy, who was, as Francis Daubigny expressed it, an advocate of the principle of standing alone, working out your own salvation, shaking off the mysticism of the Church?

Patricia scarcely dared to breathe, for oh! she must not disturb him! He must not see her, must never know that she had seen him. This moment in his life was sacred between himself and his crucified Lord.

She held her breath, but tears welled up unbidden into her eyes, and overflowed in silent streams. Angrily she dabbed at them with her handkerchief. She didn't want to cry! Why should she cry? . . . Supposing a sob escaped her? She hardly

dared move even to get out her handkerchief, and if she made a sound with her sobbing. . . . Fool! why was she crying, anyway?

Ah, Patricia, why, indeed? Was it not because Peter had got what she had lost, what she had never, never had? . . . That was what Galilee had given and taken away. That was why she had so strangely lost Peter—Christ had got him. Christ of the Cross, not the inspired Teacher of Galilee, not the Genius of Nazareth, but Christ of the Cross and of the Church, the mystic Christ of a mystic religion. If it wasn't so—why had Peter come to the church, why was he prostrate before the Cross? . . . Yes, he had found Christ crucified and risen from the dead and ascended into heaven!

Patricia was still trembling, and shivering as if with cold, in the warm, quiet air of the chapel. Peter's bowed figure remained motionless. . . . But she must get out of the building before he saw her. . . . Oh, what if her own terrible awareness of his avowal should make him turn and see her, just as something had made her turn her head and search the gloom of the chapel? . . . Yet, trembling as she was, how could she manage to get up from her chair and walk down the aisle without disturbing him? Would the leg of her chair make a screech against the marble floor? What should she say to him if he saw her?

A new tenderness for her old friend filled her. The kneeling figure appealed to her maternal instincts, her senses mothered him. The sense of her own increased loneliness was for the moment lost in that feeling of mother-love for the man whom she had failed to love sexually. . . . Yet, unconsciously, there was, mingled with that maternal tenderness, a very human jealousy. The Christ Whom Peter had found would, she knew, give to his life that thrill which was being denied to her; and, as she thought pleadingly, you must get love into your life one way or another! Well, Peter was going to get it! He had got it already, through the Christ of the Cross, the Christ of the Church—through this strange, new—well, what could she call it but *flair*—yes, flair for religion, this sudden acceptance of the supernatural, the mystical, which before he had so ignored.

Had he, she wondered, definitely and consciously sought this still sanctuary? Had he meant to prostrate himself at the foot of the Cross? Or had he, like herself, been moved to enter the chapel by some power outside himself? . . . Oh, what had happened to him? In what way had he suddenly seen things from the very opposite angle?

Patricia rose soundlessly from her low chair, and tip-toed down the aisle on silent feet that scarcely touched the floor.

When she reached the door she stopped, and breathed more freely than she had done since she saw the kneeling figure. She looked back. There was no movement in that shadowed darkness. Now she could not distinguish him, except as a solid patch in the gloom. . . . Still she stood there, staring—staring—all fear of his seeing her gone. How strange to think that that prostrate shadow was her old friend and companion—her knight of Kensington Gardens—her lover of a few days, scarcely a week, for Galilee had claimed him from the very first. . . . Yes, she knew that now. The spirit of Galilee had claimed him, taken him from her. Christ had got him!

As these amazing thoughts surged through her, Patricia turned, slipped noiselessly through the door, and ran down the stairs to the monastery entrance. She could not go up to her room—she wanted air, fresh cool air to restore her nerves, to steady her. Blindly and unheedingly she hurried on and on, till she came to the loggia in the concealed garden, and flung herself down on the very seat which Peter had vacated so short a while before.

As she sat there, opposite the cold snows of Hermon from which the rosy light had long since departed, the cold green-blue of the Mediterranean, she went over and over in her mind the many discussions she and Peter had had on the subject of his *unbelief*. She remembered so well how he had said to her:

"If you really believe all the things you say you do, Pat, if you believe every word of the creed you sing so devoutly, I don't know why you don't go mad! I don't see how anyone who believes in all the things they say they do can remain sane in this world. . . . How can they live in the world as it is, and as Christians, so-called, make it, and not go mad? . . ."

And now? Would Peter go mad? No, a hundred times no! she thought emphatically. This new Peter was going to be radiantly happy. He was going to be just like Mr. Maitland—one of those people whose religion makes them a splendid advertisement for their faith. Already she had seen a look of ecstatic happiness in Peter's eyes, but she hadn't understood it. She had never dreamt that Christ was the cause!

Well—there Peter was, at the foot of the Cross, and here she was, absolutely alone. And something told her that Peter believed with the truest of all beliefs, which comes through no logical reasoning or theological discussion, no study of the higher criticism. He believed because—Patricia paused, just *because he believed*. She knew what that meant. The words might sound silly to other people, but she knew what she meant by them. That was how he did believe, and everyone knows that a

spiritual belief cannot be tested by logic or by reasoning. . . .

But how was it that Peter had found the power to believe? Why had he, of all people, found it in Palestine? Peter had found belief just where she had lost it—where she had been unable to fit into the Galilean picture the Christ of her "churchian" days. How was it that in Galilee more than in any other place in Palestine she had visualised the humanity of Jesus to the exclusion of His divinity? Seen in Him just the perfect example for all other sons of men? All the superhuman, all the mystical side of Him—His miraculous birth, His transfiguration, His resurrection—His ascension—had left her in Galilee, had vanished, been forgotten, become a part of her "churchian" faith which had done its work, served its time, and was no longer necessary to her. Poor Patricia, her roots of faith had been truly in sandy soil—and "in time of temptation they had withered away." All that remained to her was a humanitarian ideal—Jesus the Master Man, the inspired Genius who had made the most triumphant appeal to humanity of any man through the ages of history . . . and her heart was left desolate. Had she known them, she might now have recalled the words of Saint Augustine: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts rest not until they rest in Thee."

Vaguely these thoughts, tossed up from her subconsciousness, floated like flotsam and jetsam through Patricia's mind—revelations of what she had lost, of what Peter had gained. . . . Quite suddenly she decided that the only thing to do was to break loose from Peter. She must hide from him her knowledge of that scene in the chapel, her discovery that he had so radically changed his views, that his subtle change towards herself was due to anything connected with religion; and then she must ask him to give her back her freedom, to allow her to break her promise to be his wife. She must liberate Peter as well as herself from a bond that should never have been forged. He didn't want her now, he didn't need her, she knew that.

A tumult of excitement stormed her senses. Yes, she would free them both. She must do so, must!

In her agitation she rose from the seat and walked quickly back to the monastery. . . . Oh, if she were free! If *he*—the Anglo-Arab—knew that she was free before they parted, before they left Mount Carmel! And if that was to be the case he must know it that very night.

Again, as she went upstairs, she had to pass the chapel door. It was now closed. Shut, probably, for some hours. It was close on supper-time—must be. Yes, there was the bell. She ran quickly up the last few stairs. . . . How was she going to get

through that meal—through the rest of the evening? How meet Peter's eyes without betraying her knowledge of his secret? . . . How, above all, was she going to contrive an interview alone with him after the meal? And how procure their freedom, his and hers, without hurting his feelings? Oh, how simple it all would be if she could only tell the truth! But truth is so difficult, or we make it so, because the telling of it seems unkind, hurtful. The truth about herself and her love for Francis Daubigny would seem—well, just too awful, seeing that the man hadn't even told her he loved her—not in words. And so she supposed it would be better not to tell the truth. Better be untrue than awful. Conventions are strong things, hard to eradicate.

One frock was dropped to the floor, another was popped over her head. She drew it down, shook herself, brushed her boyish head, kicked off her dusty outdoor slippers, and thrust her slim feet into a thinner pair, snatched up a clean handkerchief, scented it—and she was ready. Slim and smiling, and as sweet to look upon as though she had taken hours instead of minutes to dress for dinner, she ran downstairs.

Peter and Francis Daubigny kept her waiting. They gave her just the needful minutes to get herself in hand—flirt her powder-puff—and be ready to greet them both with her usual fine air of youthful *camaraderie*.

CHAPTER XXIX

FORTUNATELY for Patricia's plans, Father Joseph did not visit the dining-room that night, and so when the evening meal was finished she was able to get hold of Peter to come for a short walk with her. It was to be their good-bye to the lovely moon of Carmel, she said.

They had managed somehow to get through the meal with greater ease and less self-consciousness than Patricia had expected. It was, of course, the presence of Francis Daubigny that saved the situation, for even though he was distinctly concerned in the drama, he was also a man of infinite resource, a man of the world who knew how to skate over thin ice, and skilled in handling

delicate positions. He kept the conversational ball rolling until, with the appearance of coffee, he felt that the engaged couple should be left to play the game by themselves, and with a vague excuse went off to his own room.

Peter eagerly accepted Patricia's suggestion of a moonlight stroll; it seemed a most appropriate ending to the happy times they had had together on Mount Carmel, a fitting wind-up of the pleasant little dinner *à trois* which they had just been enjoying. Daubigny was a good talker, and the food, as always, had been excellent. He had not sensed the slightest awkwardness during the meal, nor had he the slightest suspicion of Patricia's real reason for luring him forth after it.

Once outside the monastery, they turned their steps up the hilly road towards the quiet country—the same white road that Patricia could see from her window, and which, in the opposite direction, led down to the sea-level and Haifa. They talked at first on that safe and most natural of all topics to the places they had seen in Palestine—the beauty of the night and of the moon. To a northerner the beauty of that southern moon, and of her attendant stars, is a source of perpetual wonder and admiration; it takes many moons to rob him of his surprise at its size and brilliance, and his astonishment at the brightness of stars which even alone can give a most appreciable illumination . . . More than once they passed tall young Arabs walking as Moslem youths do walk when the moon is full and God's wonder is in the firmament, not with their lovers or their wives, but just as Jonathan and David walked, not really hand in hand, but little finger locked in little finger. Stately figures, robed and turbaned, speaking together of God knows what, only certainly of nothing understandable to or guessed at by the Western mind. Once they passed a begging friar, returning late from Haifa to seek his hermit cave, a staff in one hand and on the other arm a big sack, filled with the offerings of the fed to the unfed. . . .

Patricia and Peter were walking arm-in-arm, but they had not kissed—Patricia had seen to that, had allowed no opportunity for fond embraces. She shivered at the thought of such a thing—almost a sacrilege, she thought—or was it betrayal? A Judas kiss . . .

Presently she broke the silence that had fallen between them.

"Peter," she said softly, and her voice was husky and tender, her familiar *timbre* of emotion, "I suggested this little walk because I wanted to ask you something."

Peter almost withdrew his arm. She felt him start, while she herself fought hard to appear very calm.

"Yes, Pat?"

They had instinctively stopped, and stood facing each other, eyes nervous of eyes.

"Peter, will you give me back my promise—set me free?" The words were out.

"Pat!" Peter's voice shook, and it was quite a moment before he could continue. "Why, dearest, of course I will, if you want it."

Patricia picked up his words quickly. "Yes, Peter, I do want it!"

She took his arm again and held it closely to her side.

"I think I'm fonder of you to-night than I have ever been," she said, "but I don't want to go on with it . . . with being engaged, I mean. I want us to be just good friends again—to be friends and to be free. That's what I want."

Peter was silent, but he returned her increasing pressure of his arm. He was bewildered. This time Pat was evidently serious—but why? They had got on better during these last few days in Carmel than they had done since leaving Jerusalem. Why this apparently sincere wish to break off their engagement?

"It's got nothing to do with you, Peter; you've been a dear. It's nothing in the world, except that I've been engaged to you and I never should have been, and—oh, Peter, I'd so much rather have you always for my dearest and best friend. I would far, far rather have it like that. It was a sort of a trial, wasn't it?"

Peter was still bewildered. Here was Pat saying, so tenderly, so tactfully, just what he would have liked to have said himself to her, just what he felt towards her. Her words opened a flood-gate of tenderness towards her, of gratitude—yet because she was a woman, and Pat, because he knew her pretty well, if not quite thoroughly, he knew that he dared not thank her, dared not instantly speak the truth and tell her that he cordially agreed with every word, and welcomed her suggestion. For her dear sake—and how dear she was!—for the true woman in her, he must protest, must play the distressed lover. Oh, why was truth so difficult? It was the same question that Patricia had asked herself so short a time ago. "Why does life make truth so impossible?"

Instead of saying what he would have liked, on the one occasion when truth might have been possible, he spoke his mummer's words, acted his part.

"Pat, my beloved—if this is really what you feel . . . if it is . . . well, whatever I feel about it, it mustn't interfere with your happiness. But—is that really what you want? Have you considered . . ."

Patricia interrupted him.

"Oh yes, Peter, it is. I rushed into our engagement because your going away made me feel so wretchedly lonely. If you hadn't gone, our old friendship would have gone on as it was. And now that I've tried being engaged, now that I've had time to reflect upon the fact that being engaged to you means marriage one day—well, I want to go back to the old footing, I want to be your best woman friend instead of your very bad wife! For that's what I'd be, I'm quite sure!" She tried to laugh, and failed, so she held up her lips instead. "You know I should be a devil of a wife, Simon! Just kiss me as your best friend, and call the bargain off!"

She had used that name Simon for him, that intimate name, intentionally, to keep up the pretence. And Peter kissed her because she was a darling.

"I know I've disappointed you, Pat——" He tried to say more. He felt wretchedly unworthy and unmanly; he had been a failure.

"No, no!" She spoke urgently. "You haven't. It's all me—not you. Entirely me and the way I'm made. . . . When you first kissed me—I loved being kissed and being loved so much that I thought I was in love with you, thought I must be." She laid her head against his shoulder. "I suppose I'm just beastly . . . I must be . . ."

He held her protectingly against her own fears.

"Yes, I believe I am. I'm sure I am, for I love being loved, I loved your kisses and your love of me. I love that even now. Even now when I know I don't love you as a girl who is in love ought to love you, as the girl who is to be your wife . . . If I didn't want to marry you I oughtn't to have liked being kissed by you, so I must be dreadful! But that was just how it was, why I became engaged to you." She drew herself away from him. "But it will have done us both good. It will have taught us both a lot. And why shouldn't people have a trial of each other as lovers? Why not find out . . ."

She paused, for she knew now that, to-night and every other night since Francis Daubigny had been with them, she had not wanted Peter's kisses, that instead of thrilling her they had bored her; that physically she had shrunk from them—dreaded them.

"Yes, why not, Pat? There's no reason why an engagement should be binding—we aren't Germans!"

He tried to speak lightly. There was no need for him to protest, no need to tell lies. For once Patricia was behaving with extraordinary consistency, being consistently inconsistent again, not saying one thing and meaning another, not appearing

to want her freedom and then feeling furious with him because he gave it her. And oh, the relief her words had brought him; a relief so great that it was terribly difficult to talk tactfully.

They walked on slowly up the hill into greater silence—slowly and with bent heads. Then Patricia said suddenly:

"It is so dear and big of you, Peter, not to make a fuss, not to protest. As my friend I knew you would understand—but as my lover . . ."

Peter's pulses quickened. Ah, was it coming? Had Pat, after all, expected him to say that his heart would break if she gave him up? Should he have protested, said that he simply wouldn't hear of taking so final a step so suddenly? Was she hurt, after all, by his lack of a lover's pleadings?

"I think I'd be a selfish cur, Pat," he said eagerly, "if I refused your wish. I always felt that it was your loneliness that made you accept me. I was always afraid, and I think you knew it."

Patricia's mind was less on what Peter was saying than on the problem his words called up. Why on earth couldn't they be sincere with each other? Why couldn't he trust her—why couldn't she trust him? . . . Why couldn't she tell him that she had discovered for herself that he no longer loved her with a lover's passion, because he had given, for the time being, anyway, all his passion to Christ—that a very different kind of desire from that of man for woman was filling him? . . . And why could she not tell him that on her own side she wanted her freedom in order to give herself to another man? It seemed so foolish to hide up all these truths, and yet . . . Well, being sincerely fond of one another, they refrained from "brutal frankness" in order to spare each other's feelings, and because the training of their civilisation seldom admits of the truth when crucial issues are at stake.

But the engagement got broken, all the same, kindly and tactfully dissolved, and they managed to thrust it well behind them, to recognise the fact that for Patricia it had been a failure, and that was that. When they turned round again and faced the Hospice and their return to it, it was not as tragic lovers but as comrades and dear friends.

And to show their friendship, they walked with their little fingers linked like the tall young Arabs on ahead of them, whose white-robed figures and turbaned heads were so much more picturesque and biblical than their own prosaic and modern forms. . . .

But soon Our Lady of Mount Carmel, that great Mother-house of the ancient order, which had become their temporary home, and to which they were to say good-bye on the morrow, loomed up before them, and they slackened their steps, loth to think that this was their last night in this peaceful and beloved spot.

And oh, how Patricia did love it ! How she wanted to enjoy her new freedom in it and on its glittering height ! . . .

But was it freedom you wished to enjoy, Patricia ? Was it not a new and closer yoke of bondage ? With all your bobbed hair and your short skirts and your orange pyjamas and your cigarettes, do you really belong to the modern world of emancipated women, or have you just strayed in there out of the old harem-world ? Before you answer, remember what "harem" means. It means "the home," the women's private portion of a Moslem dwelling. Remember that in a harem there need not be, and to-day there very rarely is, a plurality of wives, such as your jealous soul would never tolerate. Your god of Love is a jealous god—as jealous as the One God Whose Prophet was Mohammed !

It was not until they had parted that Patricia said to herself : "Peter, dear, I wonder if it will ever dawn on you that you were so filled with your new happiness that there was no room in you for jealousy ? And yet it's such a little time ago that you said you were 'always jealous' ! . . . Well, yes, certainly Francis does simulate pretty nicely, but anyone less taken up with his own thoughts and his own happiness might have suspected—might have wondered if the Anglo-Arab had anything to do with my wish for freedom ; but not you, Peter, dear Simple Simon ! "

CHAPTER XXX

THE whole of "that freedom" business had not taken Patricia and Peter more than one hour to settle ; the night with its full moon was still young when they found themselves at the monastery door, where Peter said good-night to her and took his new-found freedom to the solitude of his bedroom.

Patricia's reflections upon his obvious lack of jealousy were cut short by the appearance of Francis Daubigny, who came sauntering up the road in the company of one of the Carmelite Fathers from the other monastery farther along the mountain ridge.

As they passed Patricia they stopped abruptly. It seemed obvious to Daubigny that she had been waiting for him, that she urgently wanted to speak to him. She looked happy and eager, as though she had accomplished something about which she wished him to know. With a word of excuse to his companion he turned back, and the monk, with a brief good-night to them both, tactfully went on his way alone, leaving the lovers standing together under the high wall of the fortress-like building.

"I want to tell you something!" Patricia said impetuously, speaking with husky, impassioned eagerness and walking the while towards the lighthouse.

Francis Daubigny followed her. Why not? he argued. Why not for the last time enjoy the delicious agony of resistance? Silently they walked over the ground. Urgently—and, for Francis Daubigny, ill-advisedly.

It was not until they were standing together with their backs upright against the white wall of the lighthouse, gazing at the night-beauty of the world with unseeing eyes, lost in their own governing senses, their awareness of each other's proximity, that Patricia broke the silence by saying:

"I told you I wanted to tell you something, and so I do!"

She was nervously breathless, as if the thing she had to say was choking her. But it had to be said.

Francis Daubigny waited, moved almost imperceptibly further away from her. Was she going to confess her love for him?—with the moon shining on her pale face and her slimness outlined against the white-washed wall, as exquisite to his senses as an arum-lily blossom in the monastery garden! Then God help them both.

"Can't you guess what it is?" she asked.

Francis Daubigny shook his head. If he had guessed he was not going to tell her so.

"Peter and I are just friends." She spoke almost combatively. "We have mutually agreed to end our engagement. We both felt that it was just a sort of trial—to see if it was nicer being lovers than friends—and it wasn't!" She spoke the last words decisively, conclusively.

Francis Daubigny almost cried out. The girl's news had dealt him, as it were, a body-blow. He tried to say something and failed. What could he say? After a brief silence, which

seemed to her like an hour, he managed to get out 'some words.

"Mutually? Did he really want it broken off, Patricia?"

"Yes," defiantly. "Couldn't you see it was coming to that?" There was a tinge of exasperation in her tone. "Why didn't he say 'Thank God'?" Why didn't he look delighted?

"The whole thing was absurd," she went on, "and in his heart Peter knew it was. He was really very little more in love with me these last few weeks than I was with him. We were great friends, and we still are that. We have known each other all our lives—and it was just because we were going to be separated tha twe fancied ourselves in love with each other. At least *Peter* thought he was in love with *me*, and I—well, I tried to convince myself that I was in love with him, because . . . well, just because I was so frightfully lonely. After he sailed I determined to come out to Palestine . . ." She stopped.

"Yes?" Francis Daubigny said. "Go on!"

"I . . . well—I was more religious then. I thought that if I came to Palestine—if Peter and I were together in Palestine—I would feel surer . . . I would feel surer about my own beliefs, and I would know if I loved him—if we could be happy together as man and wife. As happy as we had been as friends. . . . And now I know we couldn't, that the engagement I rushed myself into because I was a lonely little fool was only going to spoil our old friendship and do nothing for our real happiness." She spoke nervously, pleadingly.

Francis Daubigny had walked away from her during her last halting words. Then he came back and looked into her eyes with one of his hawk-like glances.

"I know you're telling the truth about your own feelings, Patricia," he said with a forced coldness, "but are you certain about Peter's?"

"Yes, I am—perfectly certain. Even more certain than I am about my own."

She stopped. A desperate feeling had come over her that this man at her side was not going to make her freedom worth while, was not going to take advantage of it. If she told him about Peter's new happiness—if she told him what she had seen that very evening in the chapel, he would surely be convinced that, for the time being, at least, Religion had got Peter, and she had lost him. But she could not do that—no, not even to gain her desired end. The episode was too sacred, too spiritual to be discussed even with the man she adored. And so, with Patricia-like spirit, she said :

"I can't convince you about Peter's feelings for me without betraying what only he and I know at present. But very soon

you'll understand what I'm referring to. As for myself—well”—she spoke flippantly—“ I was just exploiting my feelings—trying what it was like to be engaged. I—didn't like it.”

Francis Daubigny interrupted her.

“ You know well enough that your fondness for Peter never had any chance of developing into love, Patricia, because you were silly enough to fall in love with me.”

He slipped his arm behind her and pulled her from the wall, drew her unresistingly to his breast.

“ Oh, my love, my dear, dear love,” he said. “ That was why! That was what it was, my precious, passionate, foolish Patricia, my woman above all other women ! ”

He held her to him in an agony of happiness. She felt his agony, sensed his air of tragedy, but she raised her lips to his and made him kiss her. Their first longed-for kiss !

“ My dear little girl, I love you, I love you, I love you ! And oh, my darling, you have known it all the time ! ”

He kissed her again because she desired his kisses more than his words. She desired his lips on her eyelids and on her throat, on her little ears, and yet again on her dear mouth. She desired him to kiss her face as a bee kisses a rose, seeking nectar from its beauty—first from one petal and then from another, then back again into the very heart of it. Her mouth was the heart of a rose, her lover's lips the honey-gathering bee.

“ You knew I loved you, Patricia,” he said quietly.

“ Yes, I knew it ! ” She raised love-proud eyes to his. What need was there to say anything more ? Their kisses left no need of words. It is only lukewarm love that seeks the assurance of speech. For the time being Patricia scorned talking. Or did she rather dread it ?

“ And so, my darling, you thought that if you were free our love for each other would be honourable and justified ? That I could make you my wife ? ”

He was gazing into her upturned eyes. She closed them invitingly. He must kiss them again, and stop talking ! To be kissed in that stillness, to be in her lover's arms on Mount Carmel, with the moon blessing their love—that, surely, was enough ! This was what she had wanted. This was living gloriously !

She sighed contentedly as her lover kissed her, but instead of keeping silence with his lips on her white throat, which had been given to them when they left her eyes, to keep him from talking he repeated his questions. Had she asked for her freedom because she thought that all would then be well between them ?

“ Yes . . . I thought so. I knew you loved me. You made

me know it. Oh, you knew so well how to make a girl know it, and how to make her love you. And now that I am free and Peter is satisfied, there is nothing disloyal in our love!" She sighed a delicious sigh of perfect contentment.

"My dear, dear woman, I am ashamed. I am horribly to blame. I had no earthly right to make you love me—but *did* I make you? Didn't I try to make you dislike me?"

He set her free, refused her bewildered and clinging loveliness determinedly balanced her trembling body upright against the wall.

But like a wooden figure, it almost fell to the ground. What had his words meant? Why was he to blame? His voice had been horribly earnest. It had threatened tragedy. Was it only that he was so scrupulously honourable, so far removed from treachery, that he still felt he had not played the game, had gone behind Peter's back? . . . She did not hide from herself that she had been the temptress.

He had left her, and was walking about the green promontory, waiting until they had both regained their composure. She was quickly doing so, as she comforted herself with the idea that he was merely over-scrupulous about Peter. How little he knew Peter—the new Peter! "If only I could tell him," she said to herself. "If only I could prove to him that there was not one bit of a lover's hunger for me, not one suspicion of jealousy of himself during the whole of our discussion—not one bit! If only I could make him realise that Peter was quite unaware of how unloverlike he was!"

Presently Francis Daubigny stopped his panther-stride back-and-forward on the grass and stood shamefacedly beside her, and again Patricia was the first to speak. She did so almost naturally, with a well-assumed lightness of voice.

"What a dear quixotic man I've chosen to love! I'm afraid I must get Peter himself to convince you."

"What do you mean?" he said. "Peter has nothing to do with it. He has never had anything to do with it, not really, for there is no dishonour in breaking off an engagement. No sacred and binding vows were taken by either of you. It was a trial, you say."

Patricia looked at him in astonishment.

"You asked me what *I* meant," she said, "but surely it is I who must ask you what *you* mean. Who but Peter has anything to do with our love for each other?"

"For one thing I meant that it is better to break off an engagement than to marry a man you don't love." He paused.

"And what else did you mean? Oh, get it out!" she cried

impatiently. "Get it out, for heaven's sake, whatever it is! Don't torture me any more. But you needn't try to make me believe that you don't love me—that you have just been amusing yourself, for I won't believe it."

Again he took her into his arms, let her rest there for a moment. Then suddenly he almost shook her because of his own weakness.

"Don't become cussed again, Patricia! Don't, for God's sake, make it worse for me than it is—worse for us both!"

As a matter of fact, Patricia's show of temper had helped him. It made him able to say impetuously:

"You silly, wrong-headed darling, listen to me. Listen to what I am going to tell you—and if you hate me after you have heard it, it will be what I deserve!"

Quietly Patricia stood waiting. Her heart was sick with fear. His eyes were fixed on hers, unfathomably.

"I am a married man. I am not free. I can't ask you to be my wife. That's why your freedom can't make any difference." He spoke dully, as one repeating a lesson.

"You're married?" Patricia almost screamed the words. "Did you say that you can't marry me because you are—?"

He stopped her. "Yes. My wife is alive. Blame me as I deserve. Call me what I am, a weak coward . . ."

While he spoke Patricia's hands went out. She was tottering, almost fainting. He caught her in his arms to help her, but without tenderness. He tried to speak calmly.

"I've got out of the way of speaking about my wife or my personal affairs—and at first when I met you on the *Helouan*, it didn't seem necessary to mention the fact that I was married—"

"Oh!"

It was a quick protest and he knew that it was justified. He ought to have made some casual mention of his wife from the start, because all along he had been keenly aware of the sex-attraction he and Patricia had for each other. The instinctive mating-call had sounded for both of them from the very first moment of their speaking to each other. He ought to have warned her.

After her impetuous cry Patricia was silent, and Francis Daubigny went on, rather sheepishly, with his *Apologia*.

"On the Sea of Galilee you told me you were engaged, so I said to myself, 'That's all right. It's only I who will suffer. It can't matter to her if we do see each other, for she's in love with someone else.'"

"Oh! Oh!"

Again Patricia's cry interrupted his lame excuses. The

distress in her voice stabbed him. He had lied, and she knew it. Lied to the most truthful woman he had ever known.

"God forgive me, darling!" he said humbly. "I didn't think that really—only tried to think it. I kept saying to myself, 'She's engaged. She can look after herself—or her lover can look after his own belongings.'—You see, I did try to kill the 'little spark,' the damned little spark."

He said the words with a tender significance. They were reminiscent of their day together when they had silently confessed their love for each other.

"Yes," Patricia said quietly. "I know all the rest. You let me love you. You saw me drifting away from Peter. You knew so well what was happening—and you salved your conscience by telling me how splendid he was, by urging me not to ruin my happiness. And you knew perfectly well that each thing you said, even when you were angry, only made me love you all the more. You knew all that!"

He seized her wrists and held them with his strong lean fingers. Alas, poor Patricia! Why did she love every big and little thing about him? The way his lean fingers hurt her, the way his eyes glanced at her out of his sun-tanned face. Even the way he had deceived her!

"You can't begin to understand my temptation, Patricia!" Very quickly his firm hold on her wrists was changing into a caress. "For you haven't the faintest idea how sweet you are. You don't know your own temptingness, nor"—he smiled—"your wild-cat charm."

His voice was trembling with love. His hawk-like eyes were as tender as a woman's.

"You can't understand why I should be forgiven, little love, because you know nothing at all about your wayward, inconstant self; but you might perhaps forgive me if you knew how little sweetness there has been in my life."

He said the last words abstractedly, as though he were comparing the present with the past, herself with some ugly spectre which had confronted him.

"Your wife?" Patricia shot out the word as if she hated saying it. "Tell me more about her. Why have you left her?"

Francis Daubigny's glance dropped. Patricia's eyes hardened. He was ashamed! He dared not tell her!

"I can scarcely speak of her to you," he said. "Must we discuss her? It won't do us any good."

"Yes, we must. Tell me!" Patricia said. "I have a right to know. Tell me everything."

His last words had banished her coldness. He was suffering,

and the true woman in Patricia always melted before suffering.

"Tell me," she urged, "because I love you! . . . Oh! That's just it! . . . I love you! I love you! I love you!" She spoke passionately. "And I shall always love you! Remember that. . . . Remember it when my horrid temper makes me say things I don't mean. Remember that the real me loves you just because she can't help loving you—because you are your beloved self."

Her head dropped on his breast. They were silent.

"This is just how Peter *believes*," she said to herself. "He believes because he can't help believing, and that's real faith. And I love Francis because I can't help loving him, and that's real love. Oh, how can such love be wrong?"

Her lover was holding her as though he were protecting her from the cruel forces of the world, against the power which was going to part them, that unseen, unconquerable power. That "little spark."

"Tell me," she said again, "where is—your wife? Do you ever see her?"

He felt her shiver, and drew her closer, protectively.

"No, never." He shook his head. "I can't tell you beloved woman." He caressed the dark head, pressed it to his breast. "You need only know the fact that she left me years ago for a former lover. She grew tired of me when she discovered that I should never be a wealthy man, that my old uncle, whose heir I had been, had married again and so got a son of his own to inherit the fine estate I had expected to come in for."

Patricia raised her head, while a deep sigh of relief shook her slim body.

He was not to blame, then. His wife had left him for another man. She waited eagerly for more details.

"I was a fool," Daubigny muttered. "I married her against the advice and persuasion of my best friends."

"You were so much in love with her?" A note of jealousy at once hardened Patricia's voice.

"No. I was sorry for her. I thought she was much maligned, a creature of circumstance. I thought"—he paused—"that life had been too much for her, that my friends were hard on her, didn't make enough allowances for her home surroundings and influence." He stopped, as if afraid of saying too much.

"Yes?" Patricia said. "Go on!"

"I very soon discovered that I had been duped," he confessed reluctantly. "That she had made her own tragedies—

and had not really been in the least 'a creature of circumstance.' That, in fact, the stories my friends had told me were only half the horrid truth."

He raised his eyes from the ground. The memory of his youthful assurance and folly always shamed him. When nervously they looked into Patricia's, he was surprised to see that hers were again smiling, again bright lamps of love. She was radiant.

"Dear man," she said, "why be so downhearted, when you can divorce her? And why, in heaven's name, haven't you done so long ago?" She laughed. "But perhaps it is true that if people didn't want to marry someone else they wouldn't take the trouble to divorce the guilty party!" She held up her lips. "Until you wanted me you didn't worry about 'that freedom,' did you?"

Francis Daubigny reverenced her for her candour, for her pride in her love for him, and her honest avowal of her need of him. It was all a part of herself.

"Dear, dear man," she said tenderly. "If you are under the impression that I should mind the necessary divorce proceedings, you needn't worry any more. I shan't care one scrap. I'm not a Victorian miss. Nor am I a 'churchian,' as Peter used to call me, any longer." She laughed her rich love-laugh. "How many things love opens our eyes to, makes no matter of. How grandly it brushes aside conventions and petty obstacles! Oh, darling, what a tremendous power it is, how wonderful! Isn't life glorious, and isn't love just everything?"

She searched his still nervous eyes.

"Is not love like ours a miracle, a beautiful miracle? It completely changes our outlook on life."

She stopped, the light fading quickly from her face, and stood back from him, waiting for an explanation of the misery she still saw in his eyes and in his general bearing, his silent denial of her ecstatic outpouring.

"But, my darling, you have forgotten!" he cried. "I can't divorce my wife. I am still a Catholic." He paused. "My wife too. It couldn't be done."

"Oh, don't be absurd!" Patricia laughed harshly. And then the absurdity brought a sigh of relief. It was so wholly absurd to her. "Don't try to frighten me," she said quickly; "you know you told me that you weren't anything—except," she spoke more gravely, "I thought you were too good to speak mockingly of serious things, and having once been an R.C. you know how serious these things are to them."

She was in his arms, clinging and rejoicing, had flung herself

into them. And Francis Daubigny held her closely to him as he had held her before, defiantly, possessively. He had not been strong enough to resist, and now he could not break the rapture of her belief that she had swept away every obstacle. She was so fair, and so clean, and so pure, and yet so candidly passionate, so eager to love and live gloriously, so certain that their love was beautiful.

"But, my darling, I wasn't speaking lightly about serious matters. It is because these matters are so serious that I can't divorce my wife. I *can't* divorce her, Patricia, because whatever she is and however much I love you, and want *you*, *she* is my wife until death parts us. That is how I see the matter."

Patricia sprang back and stared at him. Looked at him as if she had never seen the face of the man in whose arms she had been, until that moment.

"I'm not a good Catholic," he said, "far from it. I am, I suppose, in practice just what you said I was—'nothing at all.' But I am still Catholic enough not to believe in divorce." He hesitated. "Words won't explain just what I feel about it, but I know that I am not free to marry any other woman until the woman who is now my wife is dead. I feel that no law can release me from the vows I took when I married her, because I married for worse and not for better"

"Oh, you're mad—perfectly mad!" Patricia's cry interrupted him. "That is the awful power of the Roman Church over a man's mind and common sense," she said. "It holds them in its clutches even when he is nothing at all!"

She broke off. Her heart was choking her. She knew that she was up against the stone wall of her lover's character, that she could make him love her, but she could never shake his moral convictions. His madness, for so it seemed to her, was exhausting her. It had filled her with a helpless rage.

"Who is wrong-headed now?" she went on after a moment. "Who is 'cussed,' I should like to know? You have paid no attention to your Church for years. It has been nothing to you, you said so yourself. You spoke of 'learning to stand alone.' And yet, on the matter which means our life's happiness, you allow its out-of-date, mediæval laws to rule you!"

He shook his head. He saw the uselessness of any argument.

"It may have less to do with the Church than you think, Patricia," he said slowly. "It may be that I can't see how it can ever be made right to break the vows one took without reservations. It may be just that. On the other hand, it may be what your words imply. I may be subconsciously more of a Catholic still than I supposed I was."

He spoke thoughtfully, as if almost to himself, so little did he expect the girl to understand him.

"Even after his open declaration of unbelief Rénan hankered after the comfort of confession. It's very hard to know."

"Oh, damn Rénan!" Patricia said savagely. "What has he got to do with you and me? We are moderns who are trying to stand alone!" She laughed tauntingly. "Stand alone, indeed!"

"My darling!" Francis Daubigny said tenderly. The girl's anger was all such a vehement part of her love for him that he could not but speak caressingly.

"But can't you see how silly it all is?" she insisted. "You can't think of her as your wife. She *isn't* your wife, except in name. She is living with someone else. Do try to forget all about her and live your own life!"

"*Try* to forget her, Patricia? Haven't I done that only too well—since I met you?" He spoke dejectedly. "Believe me, darling, that until I met you I did manage to remember that wherever she is and whatever she has become, she is still my wife. At first when I discovered how abominably she had deceived me, when my eyes were opened to her true character, I thought I had had enough of all women for all time. I was fool enough to imagine that a man could keep himself from loving, that I was strong enough, for instance, to love *you* just so much and no more, that it was perfectly safe for us both. And then—" He paused, and then, more tenderly: "I don't know how it was that I found myself in love with you, loving you far, far more than was safe for either of us. But I suppose it's like believing in spiritual things. We believe because we believe. We love because we love. Isn't that it?"

He looked into her answering eyes. It made her curiously happy that he should have expressed her own thoughts so accurately—it made him seem beautifully nearer to her, made her feel that spiritually as well as physically they were lovers.

"You are very cussed, Patricia, and you are often very naughty, and—oh, darling!—you are devoted to your dear self—and I am devoted to you! But life means something more than that. Believe me, it does!"

Patricia laughed and seduced him with her smile, curled her arms round his brown neck, kissed it passionately, and coaxed:

"Go on! Tell me more about myself!"

"I wouldn't have you one bit less cussed. Not one scrap less naughty. Is that what you want to hear?"

They both smiled, blissfully forgetful for a moment of the tremendous issues at stake.

But Francis Daubigny was world-seasoned enough to ask himself if a man ever went mad about a woman who was wholly admirable. If he didn't infinitely prefer taming a wild-cat to living with a white rabbit.

"Don't you see, darling old Die-hard," she said, "that your old-world ideas of not breaking your vows aren't fair to her either." Patricia avoided the word "wife" this time. She just couldn't say it! "If you would only divorce her she could marry the man she is living with—'in sin,' as your Church calls it. She could live in 'holy matrimony' instead. Isn't that so?"

Francis Daubigny shook his head silently. To his mind it was most decidedly *not* so.

"My dear perverse man," she persisted, "don't you see how absurd the whole thing is? I don't mean that it would be absurd for two devout true Catholics—I *do* see their point of view; but for you"—she smiled. "You are just nothing but perverseness incarnate."

"I have no defence, Patricia. Only my convictions."

"And have you forgotten our talk at Capernaum?"

He shook his head. "I remember almost every word we said that day—how very nearly I told you that I was a married man." He looked at her. "You didn't tell me then that you were engaged to Peter."

"I know, but that was because I always felt sure our engagement wouldn't last. But if you remember everything you said that day—didn't you mean any of it? All that about 'standing alone' and working out your own salvation?"

"Yes, I meant most of it. I mean it still."

"Then, in heaven's name, where do you stand? *Not* alone, if the Church is the rule of your life."

"I suppose I stand by the Church," he said, almost wearily, "in matters like this in which immense principles are concerned. Oh, don't you see, dear, lovely, ardent woman, that if I divorced my wife by the civil law I could by the civil law marry you. Both acts would be constitutionally legal. In the eyes of the civil law I should be your husband. But I didn't take my marriage vows in the civil court, I took them in the Church, and so it is to the ecclesiastical courts I should have to go to get my divorce—and those courts would not grant it to me. And, fortunately or unfortunately, we *have* that old kill-joy spark in us, darling, and we agreed didn't we, that it can be a most damnable assertive and unpleasant bed-fellow." He paused, "As I am still a Catholic—for I have not renounced my religion—

you could not be my wife by the law of the Church. My spiritual man would have committed bigamy. No, no, darling one, my true honest self, my super-self, if you like, knows that I can't make you my wife."

Patricia's eyes lashed him, denied his words, but he went on bravely, tumblingly.

"Because I made a fool of myself when I was young, thought myself wiser than my best and truest friends, am I to think that I have the right to get rid of my bad bargain? Is it right to break a contract because it is hard to keep it? Are we only to keep our vows if we don't want to break them?"

Patricia was silent. Her world of love had completely crumbled. Her glorious living was dimmed with his inglorious scruples.

Francis Daubigny left her again, and strode up and down the narrow passage. Suddenly he came back to her, faced her, and said, very pleadingly :

"Won't you try to understand me, darling? Won't you try to see that it wasn't only the priest who married us who made us man and wife?"

"Oh, don't begin about Apostolic succession and a priest not only being a priest when he's officiating!" said Patricia angrily. "I'm not in the humour for it. I can't *bear* it!"

"I wasn't going to say anything about Apostolic succession!" Again Patricia interrupted him.

"I can't listen to what you were going to say, if you mean that the Church is going to separate us—for that's what it really comes to. Your conscientious scruples about a marriage with this woman who has left you mean more to you than my happiness!"

"No, no, my darling! You *are* so cussed! It has nothing to do with my scruples for *her*. It is a matter of my scruples for *you*. It is because I must not—dare not—make you my mistress."

Patricia's arms were flung round him. Her love laughed at his scruples, scorned them.

"But, my dearest, I should look on myself as your wife, and be quite content to be your mistress—to do without any ceremony at all. What would anything matter, so long as we belonged to each other and could be together?" She sighed. "It would be just too wonderful! It would be heaven for me without dying!"

"Purgatory," he amended, "if not Hell! Oh, Patricia, Patricia, you are so young and so very ignorant of life! You don't know anything at all about what your words really mean. You haven't the foggiest idea of what it would feel like to find

people—your most intimate friends—doubting you, treating your beautiful love for me as something very far from beautiful—as grievous sin ; ostracising you."

"But a civil marriage and a civil divorce are inside the law. By the law of our country I could be your wife. My love would not be sin."

"Yes, sweet woman, but you spoke of being quite willing to do without even the sanction of the civil court. And—I told you I could not divorce her."

He straightened himself, stood away from Patricia's moonlit figure. It was wiser—safer.

"I couldn't do it !" he said passionately. "No, I couldn't !" His eyes dropped. "Don't let me do it, beloved ! Try to help me."

"Not even for me ? You can't give up your scruples to make me happy ?" Her voice too had a deep note of passion in its trembling tones.

"It's just because of you. Good God, child, don't look at me like that !" he pleaded. "Don't make a coward of me ! Can't you understand that it's because I love you as I do that I won't let you give your dear passionate self to a man who would have given his soul to get you ? Done an act he despises ?"

He looked sharply at her.

"You wouldn't want me if I were the sort of man who would do what he knew to be wrong. I *know* you wouldn't, Patricia !"

His last words were a bark, darkly reminiscent, to Patricia, of the *Helouan* days, and so she smiled indulgently. He had awakened chords in her memory, the beginning of her love for him.

"I think all the world must be mad," she said, "and only I am sane. Or I am quite mad and all the world is damnably sane." She pushed her fingers through her short hair and shook her head as if to free it from her madness.

"Do you know," she went on thoughtfully, "that the Church has robbed me of the two men who love me ?"

Francis Daubigny stared at her. What on earth did she mean ? Her voice suggested more than her words.

She smiled sadly. "No, I am not mad. Let me tell you something. Peter has fallen out of love with me because he has fallen in love with Christ . . . no, not with our Jesus of Galilee, the Man made perfect by love, but the mystical Christ of the creeds."

Patricia was telling Peter's secret, betraying that sacred revelation ; but how could she help it ? The confession had

come out before she realised she was making it. She paused a moment, then went on more nervously :

" If he had fallen in love with the Jesus Whose teachings I thought you were trying to live up to, he would not have lost his love for me." Patricia's heart was making speech difficult. " He has been so carried away by his new and mystical conversion—for I don't know what else to call it—that he hasn't the least idea that I love you, or that I wanted to break off our engagement because I knew through loving *you* that I didn't love *him*. He has"—she dropped her voice—" Peter has got Christ," she said tenderly. " He is lost in Him. He has got what I wanted to get before I wanted you. . . . And now"—she held out her hands—" if only I could be yours, I don't suppose I'd ever think about my soul. It was always you I wanted. It was never really Christ, never anything spiritual. Just you."

Tears rained down Patricia's face. Her pale cheeks glistened with them where the moonlight touched them. To Francis Daubigny they were jewels of agony. Her small tragic face hurt every nerve in his body.

" Peter ? " he said breathlessly.

" Yes. Isn't it queer ? I thought that you and Peter thought very much alike—that you both just looked upon Jesus as the Master who gave the world the most spiritual thought and teaching mankind has so far received. I thought He was your spiritual example, not to you the Christ of the Church. And now I have discovered that all that was just talk, just intellectual vanity. Neither of you knew yourselves or what you believed in. Subconsciously you were both slaves of tradition, not even as freed from superstitious influences as I am. Oh ! " she cried vehemently, " I can see you don't believe about Peter—well, I'll tell you how I know. Just before dinner, after I left you, I found Peter in the monastery chapel prostrate before the crucifix. Yes, my old ' let-things-alone ' Peter whom I used to call Simon. Now do you see what I mean ? Do you realise what the Church is taking from me ? It has taken you both ! "

" Peter before the crucifix ! " Francis Daubigny said wonderingly, while his thoughts travelled over a thousand small incidents which might have suggested to him something of the change which was taking place in the girl's lover.

" Peter ! " he said again, in the same incredulous tone. And then, with an air of distraction, he went on : " How strange it is that these spiritual revelations come to the most unlikely persons ! So often it is the case."

His thoughts had reached to India. They dealt with the

most remarkable and arrestive conversion to Christianity that he personally had ever come across, that of the Sikh evangelist, Sadhu Sunda Singh. In his early days in India, Francis Daubigny had heard so much about this man that he had determined to meet him and hear him preach, and the impression the Christian Sikh had left upon him had never been effaced. It came back to him from his subconscious mind at strange moments, and this was one of them.

The Sikh had been, like Saint Paul, an ardent hater of Jesus. He had flung stones at the Western preachers of Christianity, even though, again like his Jewish prototype, he was an educated and intellectual man whose parents had taken great trouble with his early years and upbringing, so that, by the time he was seven years old he knew the whole of the Sikh Scriptures by heart, owing to the teachings of his devout mother. And yet this bigoted Hindu, this violent hater of Jesus and persecutor of Christians, was vouchsafed a vision of Christ Himself, while he was praying to his God for guidance and for a better understanding of the Truth. In the centre of a luminous cloud, Sadhu Sunda Singh saw "the face of a man, radiant with love." At first he thought it was Buddha or Krishna, but this idea was soon dispelled by the words which Jesus spoke to him: "I am Jesus, Sadhu Sunda Singh. Why do you hate Me?" . . .

As the mystical personality of the Christian Sikh stood out vividly before Francis Daubigny's abstracted gaze, he realised wherein lay the difference between the young Englishman, Peter, and the Sikh, Sadhu, in this matter of their conversion. His thoughts were a repetition of Peter's own thoughts with regard to himself and Saint Paul. Like that great Apostle of the Gentiles, Sadhu Sunda Singh had always been a seeker after the truth; they had both, according to their lights, been walking in the way towards it; their minds had dealt constantly with the things of the spirit. Peter, on the contrary, from what Patricia had told Daubigny, appeared to have just "let things alone," avoided all issues. His mind had never dealt with spiritual things. . . .

You can think volumes in less time than it takes to say so, and so it was almost immediately after Francis Daubigny's remark about the seemingly strange individuals who were selected for the experience of spiritual revelation, that Patricia answered it.

"Yes," she said, "isn't it extraordinary? We both thought that—all three of us, in fact—" She stopped and then rushed out her next words, which had nothing to do with the broken sentence.

"Before Peter went to Galilee, of course, he never would or could have entered the chapel. He was the last person on earth for whom I should have expected a sudden conversion." She looked at Daubigny almost apologetically. "He *has* somehow—*been converted*—hasn't he? What other word can I use?"

"None," Francis Daubigny answered. "I suppose ~~He~~ has just felt what is called 'the sense of conversion.'"

Patricia fenced. She detected a fine note of envy in his voice. Wasn't she then enough for him when he was so greatly enough for her?

"Peter 'let things alone.' He used to say that wondering and questioning and all that sort of thing, if it led to believing, would make the awfulness of the present day more than a sane man could bear. He said it was only by letting things alone that you could get any happiness in the world—his world. 'I just try not to be too beastly,' he said. And now"—her voice hardened—"he will become, as Saint Augustine expressed it, 'intoxicated with God.' And it *will* be a sort of madness if he has found Christ through the Church"—she looked with glittering eyes at her lover—"for it makes people mad when it teaches them to allow ridiculous scruples to destroy human happiness; when it makes an otherwise level-headed man like you think it is better to allow your wife to 'live in sin,' as it is called, with the man she loves than to divorce her and allow her to be his legal wife."

Francis Daubigny caught hold of her wrists and gazed commanding into her wild-cat eyes. Barked at her. Made her listen to him.

"You are talking rot," he said. "Lying against your own soul. You don't mean half of the ugly things you are saying. Stop it!"

Patricia tried to free herself, feigned rage.

"No, you've got to listen and do what I tell you, or I'll shake you as you deserve to be shaken . . . oh, my darling!" Instead of shaking her, he kissed her quivering lips, her face once more the rose, his lips the honey-seeking bee. How could a man be angry with a woman for loving him—when he loved her?

"Oh, my dear, why do I love you so? Why are you so perverse and so cruel?"

"Just because we were made for each other, dearest. I am only cruel when you are maddeningly stupid!"

He kissed her tenderly, but she persisted in her indictment.

"Yes, you are. Divorce her and allow them to marry, and I won't be cruel or cussed any more."

"But if I did divorce her," he protested, "the man with whom she is just now probably has no wish or intention of ever marrying her. He would probably never have openly lived with her if he hadn't known that as a Catholic she *couldn't* be divorced, and that even if she was free she wouldn't expect him to marry her. She isn't a fool, whatever else she is."

Their eyes met. Patricia had never imagined that the woman whom he still called wife had sunk so low.

Patricia's experience of the world was very limited, quite out of proportion to her instinctive knowledge of her own power as a woman. She had not the slightest inkling of the social degrees in the underworld. Francis Daubigny had been perfectly right when he told her that she did not know what she was talking about in declaring that she was willing to be his wife only in her own eyes, his mistress in those of the world, that she would dispense with civil or ecclesiastical ceremony so long as she might be with him. There is a fine romance in thinking the world well lost for love while you are safely in that world, but it is quite another matter to bear the slights it metes out to you when you have lost it. It takes less courage to dive in off the deep end than to keep your head up while swimming in the cold waters of malicious representation and slander. . . .

Patricia had left the shelter of the white tower; she was now marching off to the green promontory which lay behind them landwards, and Francis Daubigny left her to walk up and down it alone for some moments. What he had told her had disgusted her, and her disgust was not so much for the woman who was his wife as for himself for considering that he was still bound to her. Presently he followed her, and when he was walking silently at her side, he slipped his hand through her arm, and said very gently:

"Try to forgive my human frailty, dear human Patricia!"

"Oh!" she cried desperately, "it isn't your frailty. I don't despise anything that's wholly human!" She flashed round on him, tiger-cat fashion. "I love it, love it, love it! I never dreamed that I could love anything or anyone so dearly! I love the love you couldn't help. I adore all that you despise in yourself—your love for my poor self!"

It was, of course, his resistance that she loved most, just what she pretended to despise. It was the part of him that she could not subdue, the thing which eluded her.

"Dearest, I can bear your anger. I must bear it, and it is only anger, not scorn. You don't really despise me for not trying to extinguish 'the little spark.' No matter how absurd my scruples may seem to you, you know that they are the best

part of me. You know it, beloved woman, and you wouldn't be contented with the lower me."

Patricia could say nothing, do nothing. Out of all the ocean of turbulent thought upon which her mind was tossing she could find nothing to say that would convince him of the folly of his scruples or show him how wasted was his renunciation of herself. She knew she could not, for she realised that he loved her with a higher and a finer love than she had until now imagined, and that he would not profane that love. She knew that, just as Peter now apparently believed in Jesus as the Christ of the Cross, his Divine Saviour, so Francis Daubigny believed that the vows he had taken when he married a woman who was even then deceiving him—vows that he would not have taken if he had known the truth about her—were sacred and binding. What was the use of facing him with any of his modern "stand-alone" ideas? . . .

She brushed aside the thought that the keeping of his sacred marriage vows might be a part of his fine code of standing alone. She attributed it entirely to the force of tradition, to the power of the Roman Catholic Church. At crucial moments its children clung to it. But she did not know, because of her anger, how hard it was for her lover to stick to his scruples, not to offer her the less worthy part of him. She did not know how much tradition, as she now called it, had done for his spiritual development.

With her desperate need of him almost drowning her, with the moon of Galilee making her dear pallor still more pale, how easy a matter it would be for her lover, who had never set himself up as a strict moralist, to smother the "little spark," to turn his back on the Master of Galilee, and take the girl at her word. Take her away to a country where vile tongues could not touch her, where no one would know! . . . What was he to do?

Quite suddenly Patricia said: "Isn't it rather a strange thing that Jesus didn't talk to His disciples on what the world to-day calls 'the vexed subject of sex'? At least I don't think He did." She paused. "Of course He was exquisite to poor Mary Magdalene, but then He was always lovely to sinners. But *did* He ever touch on the strongest force in human nature? You're sure to remember!"

Francis Daubigny was thoughtful for a moment.

"No—I can't remember anything. Perhaps the question is a more *vexed* one to-day than it was then. It may not have needed His help as much as many other things. He was a Jew, remember, and a very strict one, to the very end, and He always observed the Law. He lived in and knew an Oriental world of

men and women. The Jews were then, as they are to-day, above all things 'family men,' and always stuck close to their code of family morals." He paused. "You must remember, too, that there is much less forbidden to an Oriental husband than to a Western one. Almost nothing is expected of him by his wife as a lover, but a very great deal is demanded of him as a father, as the head of his house. Even in pre-Islamic days, you know, most Oriental women had very little freedom. A married man could not have seen so much of any woman as I have seen of you, for instance. Undoubtedly the Western freedom of women does complicate the question of sex, but I think Jesus must have seen less need for reform in carnal than in spiritual morality."

"Oh!" Patricia cried, "there you are just the clear-headed arguer again, just the cold, intellectual thinker, speaking of the 'Moral Reformer,' the Man who lived in and knew only the ancient world of men and women—when you know that the Divine mind must have known everything, and every sort of civilisation in the future and in the past. You are speaking again like my companion of the White Synagogue, who agreed that 'the man or the woman who really believes in God does not need a Church.' You said that to me, you yourself. You spoke as though you believed it. Why don't you put it into practice?" She paused, then said slowly: "This will make me hate your Church and your Christ of the Creeds!"

"Hush! Don't!" said Daubigny quickly. "Remember that it was the Catholic Church which kept alive the name of Jesus in Europe through all these centuries. Surely we owe her a debt of gratitude for that, if for nothing else. If she gave us a Christ of the Creeds, she also gave us Jesus of Galilee."

"Yes, and lots of other nice things!" Patricia interrupted, with bitter sarcasm. "We owe it a debt of gratitude for all the beautiful buildings it has given us, and for these kind Fathers," she nodded her head in the direction of the monastery, "and for heaps of other picturesque and mediæval-looking things like nuns in their floating veils—lots of effective touches!"

"Patricia," said Daubigny gravely, "I hate to hear you talking like that. Oh, my darling, how often I should have to beat you!" His eyes contradicted his words, they caressed her and gave her the sympathy she needed. "You are so fond of speaking for effect, beloved, so fond of pretending."

"And you are so fond of 'barking'!" she smiled. "You barked at me then just as you barked when we passed Spalato. Why did *you* pretend that time?"

"I suppose because my subconscious self already loved you."

"I *knew* it did!" She smiled the smile he never could resist, so he shook her, barked at her again, and drew her into his arms.

"You little devil!" he whispered. "How I long to tame you! How I long to beat you!" They laughed together. "Oh, my sweetest heart, how I want to love you!"

"I know you do," Patricia said confidently as she snuggled herself more closely to him. Her body was like the soft body of a cat, as boneless and as yielding.

He lifted her face to his, holding her chin in the cup of his hand. "You delicious darling! You always knew!"

"Of course I did, dear snarling desert dog!"

He held her still more closely for a few moments, then he said, with a quiet urgency: "But you must help me, Patricia! How am I to leave you? How could any man leave you?"

She laughed her rich love-laugh again as she said: "Oh, Peter managed it all right. He has left poor Patricia, and you will do the same," she sighed, "because Patricia is too material for you both."

Her mocking ceased in a cry. "Why did you make her love you, that poor Patricia? Why did you bark at her?" She was weeping now. "Oh, why did you forget?"

"My poor darling, don't begin it all again. It's something inside us that gives us scruples and beliefs. Don't blame the Church, for I hope that if I had made the same vows which I made before the altar here under these stars and this pure moon of Galilee I should have kept them just the same—even if the breaking of them could hurt nothing but my own soul. I hope I should keep them—I hope so, even if it could do you no hurt for me to break them!"

"Oh, hurt me!" she said. "Make these vows now, make them under this Galilean sky!" She laid her hands on his breast. "The Galilean would not have condemned our love. He would understand it!"

"He seldom condemned human frailty, Patricia, but He did condemn man's sinning against the Holy Ghost. He would condemn me for profaning my love for you by trying to crush out the divine in me which He came to nourish. . . . There was no sin in His eyes equal to that of quenching the divine spark, drowning the voice of the Holy Ghost, which is our conscience."

"You call it profaning—your love for me? You speak of hurting me, when I am free, when I owe nothing to anyone, and you too are free to enjoy life as it ought to be enjoyed! He never meant His teaching to spoil our lives, make life not worth living!"

Again he stopped her, checked her passionate outburst.

"Little girl, my poor little girl," he said tenderly, "we must say good-night—it's ever so late!" He took her in his arms. "It is to be good-night and good-bye, Patricia—our real good-bye, for to-morrow—"

He stopped. They both knew what to-morrow meant—a drive with Peter back to Jerusalem.

For the remainder of their time together they said a lovers' good-night, and Patricia, while Francis Daubigny's arms were round her, forgot everything that it was unpleasant to remember. For that, you see, was the way of Patricia. Temperamentally she was pretty nearly the Pagan that Louis Tricoupis had called her. Pretty nearly, but not quite.

It was also quite like her to imagine that in saying good-bye to Francis Daubigny she was renouncing for ever all other possible lovers. She visualised herself dragging out her empty days as a lonely old maid, hugged the idea to her breast, as a token of her love for Francis, shrank in disgust from the idea that any other arms than those at the moment around her could ever comfort her or hold her, ever appeal to her physically. Poor unproved Patricia! She was so very young and so very ignorant of her real self!

Not so Francis Daubigny. He knew her better than she imagined. He knew that the life that flowed so abundantly through her healthy young body would fight for its rights. He knew that she was so young and so ignorant of human nature that she did not dream that in time she must forget him, if not wholly, yet sufficiently to allow of her loving not once but more than once, if fate should will that she should again fall in love with a man whom she could not marry. And with the perverseness of her nature she might well do it, he told himself. Of course he ought to have been thankful for her dear sake that following the law of nature she *was* bound to forget him—and yet how could he be? He was human, and very little that was human was unknown to him. Experience robbed Francis Daubigny of the belief that no other man's arms would ever cherish his darling. Patricia must live—he knew that, "live gloriously," as she herself expressed it. And knowing her temperament, he knew what "living gloriously" meant. He knew that, for her, life without love was not living. And because of his greater experience, each kiss was a tragedy.

And that was why the lovers' parting hurt him more than it hurt Patricia, for Patricia was able to forget—to forget everything but the fact that her lover's arms were round her, and the moon was full over Carmel.

CHAPTER XXXI

IN the morning, that glittering, freshly-dressed morning on the heights of Carmel, Patricia, the Anglo-Arab, and Peter met at the front door of the monastery, as had been arranged the night before, punctual to the moment for their journey back to Jerusalem. The car, with its Syrian chauffeur, was ready to start just as soon as they had deposited their light luggage on the carry-all and taken their seats.

Peter, out of consideration for Patricia's feelings, to avoid the intimacy of a *tête-à-tête* after the events of the previous evening, had insisted upon Francis Daubigny travelling with them, and as he was due in Jerusalem that same day, the older man had no valid excuse to offer for not doing so. Fortunately there were so many practical things to be attended to at the last moment—the packing of their baggage on to the car, the paying of their bills, their farewells to their kindly host—that the three had not met before, that morning, and there was, therefore, none of the constraint and shyness between them which there might otherwise have been. Their consciousness of the new developments which had arisen since they had all three met together for their evening meal the night before was not embarrassing.

As we already know, the lovers were supposed to have said their real good-bye that previous evening, and this drive together would be a severe test for them both, but it had to be endured. With Daubigny still beside her, in such intimate proximity, with his voice thrilling through her like the fine notes of a violoncello, their good-bye certainly did not mean to Patricia, with her living-for-the-moment tendency, what it meant to her lover. With such close physical contact, side by side with him, how could she sense the loneliness of the future when they would be physically apart? While they were avoiding each other's eyes because of the exquisite danger of their glances, while their riot of unexpressed passion was all in keeping with that of Nature's gay exuberance, how could she in any way feel that they had said their final farewell, how realise that, to all intents and purposes, they had already parted?

And for her what a totally different drive was this of her departure from Mount Carmel from that of her arrival! How different was she herself from the girl who had sat beside Peter on that occasion, trying to persuade herself that she was happy just because a nice man like Peter wanted her! . . .

Yes, but that was it—he *didn't*! Now she knew that he didn't. Now she realised that he had merely tried—consciously and almost successfully—to play the part of the devout lover.

. . . Well, that pretence was over. Now he just loved Christ, dear, dear Peter! And she, by some mysterious ruling of their destinies, loved the Anglo-Arab! . . . Of course she had really loved him all the time, ever since he had barked at her while they were passing Spalato. Yes, that was the beginning of it. Ever since then his personality, and God knows what else, had irritated her, and excited her, and made up for her the true meaning of life—made her understand.

The same sun was shining over Carmel, the same tideless sea stretched beneath it like a lake of blue enamel, the same snows glittered on Hermon, with the same tones of mauve and plum-soft purple haunting its foothills; they encountered the same forage-burdened camels, moving with the same aristocratic indifference for the common herd, the same fellahs, with their mystic eyes and inscrutable calm; they glimpsed the same pictures of homely toil as they passed again on the plains the new Jewish settlements. And yet, because they themselves were so different, so utterly changed, the travellers were surprised to find that these things were still the same, that nothing was altered. But this surprise was surely consistent with human nature. Is anything more surprising than the unchangedness of your everyday surroundings when you yourself have experienced a great upheaval, when you know that the real *you* has completely changed? Nothing is more surprising than the seeming urgency of the trivial round, the common task, at serious and uncommon moments of life. And yet, so helpful is convention, so reliable a friend in time of trouble, that these three people were able to treat each other during that memorable drive with the utmost sangfroid, as if nothing unusual had happened.

It was certainly a *tour de force*, and the most splendid of the three was Peter, who seemed to have regained his light-hearted boyish spirits. If Patricia had not told Francis Daubigny what had happened, he would certainly never have guessed it. Perhaps those youthful spirits were due to Peter's subconscious sense of freedom, to his knowledge that it didn't matter to anyone how long he was going to take to find out what he

was going to do with his life or how he was going to live, the consciousness that he was free to find himself and grow up quietly. Francis Daubigny, however, attributed his geniality to bluff, for the simple reason that he could not convince himself that Peter was not still in love with Patricia. His own condition of mind precluded such a possibility.

But Patricia said to herself: "This is the old Peter, my old friend who could be such a dear silly ass. This is Peter set free, the wholly natural Peter whose soul isn't talking to him, whose little spark isn't, at the moment, a burning flame."

There was, of course, so much to occupy their immediate attention that they were never at a loss for topics of conversation. They had been following very closely the itinerary of the journey as laid down in that precious little green book, "Notes for Travellers," but as they drew nearer to Jerusalem it was less needed, for the country was becoming more and more familiar to them. Indeed it had all become curiously less strange and more acceptable to both Patricia and Peter as the Holy Land. Nazareth, clinging to its heights, was Nazareth now, the city which had rejected its only title to immortality, and they were "going up to Jerusalem." They had long since left the heights of Carmel, they had crossed the wide plain, and now they were ascending again.

They were not "going up to Jerusalem" as Jesus and His friends went up to it, either afoot or on donkeys; they were speeding along in a fast-travelling motor-car, that apotheosis of Western modernity. And yet the real heart of their journey was the unchanging and unchangeable East. Outwardly they saw, here and there, signs of Western influence, seeming changes, but the West never went far below the sandy surface. They were seeing the East, ever discussing and never doing, ever beautiful yet often bestial; they were seeing the East's fine humanity walking side by side with its indifference and cruelty. . . . Ah, superb East, with your lofty indifference to the sublime! Oh, gracious East, with your mock admiration and gratitude for Western benefits! Dear, surprising East, with your inherited knowledge of the unchangeableness of human nature! Ah, enviable East, with your unquestioning faith and loyalty to your chosen gods!

When they reached the height of Jerusalem the pastoral Galilean spirit seemed very far away. They became subtly conscious of their nearness to a large city, densely populated, groaning under the burden of its inhabitants, a vexed and strange multitude, a people of infinite sameness, yet infinite variety.

Jerusalem throbs and groans. Its appeal to travellers is

staggering. It fascinates one's eye while destroying one's ideals. But it has nothing of the ghostly calm of Tiberias, none of the Arcadian spirit of Carmel, with its pageant of flowers and shade of trees ; it has no green hill, even far away, for it is all built over to serve the need of man. Above all, to none of the travellers that evening had it one breath of the Galilean spirit. The Fisherman's Lake had nothing to do with it, nothing in common with its crowded streets and eager, jostling merchants.

To Patricia it seemed like years since she had left Jerusalem, and in a curious way she felt as if she were coming home—as if, long ago, she had lived for a very long time in the Casa Nova, as if, now that she had returned to it, the Pilgrims' Hostel was going to give her rest from her burning thoughts.

And so it was with immense relief and pleasure that she learnt on arrival that she might, if she so desired, remain there for a fortnight longer, since the tourist season was almost at an end, and the bevy of pilgrims who had been due to arrive in a few days' time were in quarantine at Jaffa and would therefore not be coming to occupy their rooms.

CHAPTER XXXII

WITH Patricia's return to Jerusalem a new phase of her evolution was beginning, new and unexpected factors in it were waiting for her.

For the first few days she struggled bravely to accept the fact that in a world packed full of human beings she stood practically alone, that her brief taste of ecstasy and happiness must suffice her for the rest of her life. She hugged to herself the thought that it had all been worth while, yet she had to admit the reverse side of the medal. But for that brief snatch of glorious living she would never have known her present state of loneliness, so infinitely greater than the loneliness of the past.

She fought against a state of total collapse and the loss of her self-respect by energetically "doing" Jerusalem and all the

things she had left undone and unseen, as being of secondary importance, before her visit to Galilee. But all the while the definite meaning of that goodbye on the heights of Mount Carmel was driving itself subconsciously through every portion of her being. Personal loss does not become evident at the moment of parting, the worst loneliness comes gradually, with the ever-increasing assurance that the loved one has departed for ever; and so Patricia found, to the undoing of her courageous efforts. On the fourth day her defences were undermined, and she gave way to her grief. Instead of getting up in excellent time in the morning, as was her habit, she turned her face to the wall and wept tears of rage and sorrow and pity for her badly-treated self.

Nazaraina, when she came to wake her, was alarmed to find her thus. Was the beautiful Sitt not going to get up? Did she not remember that this was the Moslem festa of Birham, that all the visitors in Jerusalem would be going to see it?

No, the Sitt didn't want to see it. The Sitt was tired to death of seeing things. Seeing things didn't help one not to feel!

Nazaraina stood by the side of the bed, but Patricia's pale face was still turned to the wall.

"Oh, go away, Nazaraina!" she cried impatiently. "Get on with your work. I am quite well. For goodness' sake leave me alone!"

But Nazaraina did not go. She stood gazing with large tragic eyes at the slim young figure in the bed with its back turned to the beautiful sunshine.

"The Sitt isn't well. Nazaraina knows she is far from well. If the Sitt's body is not sick, her heart is sick."

The long, straight figure remained motionless. Nazaraina put her small white hand, which no hard work in the world could rob of its Eastern grace, on the head of her beautiful Sitt.

"Nazaraina will pray to the Blessed Virgin. She will ask her to comfort the Sitt. Our Lady of Compassion will understand. She will know the secrets of the Sitt's heart."

Patricia swooped round suddenly.

"Your Lady of Compassion belongs to the Church. She won't listen. She won't heal my heart, because it is the Church that has taken everything from me!"

She knew that Nazaraina could not follow her torrent of words. She had spoken to relieve her own feelings only. Her jagged nerves made her irritable and impatient. After a moment she went on, more slowly:

"Oh, leave me, Nazaraina!" she said again. "For goodness' sake, leave me!"

Nazaraina had understood even less than she supposed or, subconsciously, hoped. She only knew that her beautiful and generous mistress whom she could not help loving was a heretic, a heathen Protestant, and that was, of course, the reason why she was so unhappy. Our Lady of Compassion could not comfort her.

The maid's eyes became still more tragic, but soon they smiled as Patricia, ashamed of herself and of her foolish speech to the poor ignorant Syrian, caught hold of her with both hands and said in her sweetest way—and no one could be sweeter when she chose than the wild-cat Patricia :

"Nazaraina, I was very foolish and wicked. I think my poor tired head was so bad that I didn't know what I was saying. Please pray for me, Nazaraina."

She let the small hands slip out of hers. Poor Nazaraina ! Her prayers were certainly needed, but what good could they do ? What would they be, as compared to Patricia's own purely material wishes and thoughts ? "Pit the one against the other," she said to herself, "Nazaraina's prayers and my own increasing need and cry for Francis, and which will win ?" She smiled bitterly. Neither of them, but her own mind was stronger than Nazaraina's.

"Nazaraina will bring the Sitt a strong cup of coffee and some nice fresh toast," said the woman gently.

Patricia smiled again, a wholly different smile. "Dear good Nazaraina, thank you ! Do go and get it now !"

But Nazaraina lingered a moment longer, laying her hand lightly on the girl's shoulder and speaking with touching humility.

"It is difficult for the beautiful young Sitt to believe that old age has known youth, has been as young as the Sitt herself."

Patricia looked at her kindly. "But you are not old, Nazaraina ! You are just a worn and tired bit of human kindness."

"No, no, Sitt," Nazaraina answered, with a shake of her head. "Nazaraina is old. In this country she is very old. As a woman she is nothing at all. But please, Sitt, Nazaraina was once quite young."

"Of course she was ! And pretty too," Patricia cried. "And many men must have wanted to marry her. Why did you not marry, Nazaraina ?"

"When Nazaraina was young like the Sitt she too once turned her face to the wall." She shook her head. "She refused to be comforted. That was before . . ." She paused.

"Tell me, Nazaraina. I want to hear all about it."

"It was so long ago, Sitt. We were both at the mission

school. We were allowed to play together and see each other, because we were at the Christian School. We were not like the ignorant Mohammedans."

Patricia smiled. Of course that "we" meant the eternal *he* and Nazaraina.

The Syrian thought she was smiling because she had called the Mohammedans ignorant, and so she added more quickly: "Mohammedan boys and girls are not allowed to play together or see each other except when they are little children."

"I know," Patricia nodded. "Well? What happened?"

"His people would not allow him to marry me. They had only sent him to the mission school to learn French and English, they did not want him to be a Christian. They did not know he had become one and that he wanted to be baptized when I was baptized with the holy water from the Jordan. They took him away, far, far away—to Jaffa." Nazaraina spoke as if Palestine was the world and he had been taken to the other side of it.

"I have never seen him since," she went on. "He married a woman his parents chose for him—he had never seen her." She sighed. "Now he is very rich. He has an automobile of his own and takes the strangers in Jaffa for excursions—and that is because he learnt English in the mission school."

Patricia's heart was touched. She felt a genuine pity and affection for this woman whose weariness of body showed in every line of it. How pathetic it was to think that this one youthful love affair was the sole romance of her life, that now—well, that now she was finding a reflection of that romance in the Church, making religion a substitute for human love, just as Patricia herself had tried to do long ago. Nazaraina was finding support and help in the supernatural magic religion of her Church, but would she have wanted it if she had had the human love which was denied her? Patricia's own experience did not seem to say so.

The little episode did Patricia good. It made her get up and dress, and drink the excellent coffee which Nazaraina brought her, and it woke in her a momentary feeling of gratitude for her own life as compared with Nazaraina's.

It was close upon midday when she found herself in the vestibule of the Grand Hotel asking the proprietor if she could buy a seat in one of his front windows overlooking the Moslem procession. She had been told that the seats in the windows were always let to visitors on this occasion.

The manager was extremely courteous, but at the same time quite definite in his refusal. He was expressing his genuine regret—for no man has yet been born who enjoys disappointing

a pretty and gracious woman—and assuring her that all the seats in his windows would be occupied by the guests of his hotel, when a voice behind them suddenly said :

“ How do you do, Miss Paget ! This is indeed a surprise, and a pleasure. I heard that you had already left Jerusalem.”

Patricia started, her heart beating uncomfortably fast at the familiar accents. She turned quickly and faced the smiling eyes and handsome features of Louis Tricoupi, the Adonis of the *Helouan*, more than ever the modern prototype of that “beautiful youth beloved by Venus” of her school mythology. Unaccountably, a sense of fear, of something momentous in this chance meeting, came to her as he spoke, and in a subconscious way she felt dismayed. Why had he turned up just now ? What effect would he have upon her actions, upon her life ?

He was speaking now in Arabic to the manager of the hotel, who had stepped back on seeing one of his best patrons greet the girl with such obvious pleasure. Then he brought the man forward again to Patricia, and went on in English : “ This lady is a friend of mine. Will you kindly give her the seat in the window which you have reserved for me ? ”

Patricia gave a little laugh of protest. “ Oh, but I can’t take it ! Indeed I can’t ! ” she said.

“ Of course you will, ” replied Louis Tricoupi. “ You won’t be so unkind as to deny me the pleasure of giving you pleasure, and you will enjoy the procession, whereas I should not. I’ve seen it many times before.”

He turned again to the manager. “ You were reserving one for me as my right, being one of your guests, but you didn’t expect me to occupy it, did you ? ”

The manager took his cue with the smiling quickness of his race. “ I’m afraid I did not, but if you should wish to sit next to your friend, I think I can manage it—and I shall deem it a pleasure to arrange the matter accordingly.”

Patricia thanked the man, but protested a little. How could it be arranged ? Had he not said that every seat was taken ?

“ Ah, mademoiselle, it will be all right, believe me ! ” He turned to Louis Tricoupi. “ You understand how I was circumstanced ? I was obliged to refuse a stranger. If I admitted one how could I refuse others ? But as a friend of my honoured guest it is different. It arranges itself immediately.”

“ You were perfectly right, ” Patricia nodded. “ It was my mistake. I thought anyone could buy a seat in your windows so long as you had any vacant.” She smiled at him in her own engaging manner, warming the humanity in him as with a draught of good red wine.

He bowed, his senses delighted with her beauty and her affability. Then, turning to Louis Tricoupis: "Will you, sir, take your friend upstairs to the public salon," he said, "and select for yourselves the seats you would like to occupy?"

Patricia and the Adonis thanked him, and together they went up the stairs. And this chance meeting with an old acquaintance was the beginning of the third chapter in Patricia Paget's life-history.

CHAPTER XXXIII

WHEN they had chosen their seats, which were on a balcony exactly facing the Tower of David and the outer walls of the citadel and looking down upon the wide road leading from the Jaffa Gate to the open square, out of which you turn into David Street, Louis Tricoupis left Patricia with, as she thought, no intention of returning. He advised her to wait in the hotel salon until the procession came along, and not to venture out alone into the streets. This she did, and without any boredom, for already crowds of people were swarming in through the Jaffa Gate and taking up their position on the side-walks and on the top of the wall.

But she had been sitting for more than an hour on the chair where Louis had left her before the procession began to appear. And so interested had she been in watching the street that she had forgotten all about the young Greek, when he suddenly appeared and seated himself beside her in the only vacant place.

She smiled and said, with her eyes still on the crowd: "So you have come back, then! You couldn't resist the fascination of a crowd. It is awfully magnetic, isn't it?"

"I couldn't resist the pleasure of watching you enjoy it," he answered. "And I knew if I was with you, you would enjoy it still more. Isn't that so?"

Patricia smiled in the happily tolerant way in which she had always greeted one of his naively conceited speeches on board the *Helouan*.

"No, it wasn't personal vanity this time," he said, divining her thought, "although, naturally, you will enjoy it better with me than all alone. What I really meant was that if I was with you I could explain things to you, tell you some of the inner meaning of all this hubbub and tommy-rot." He spoke laughingly, happily, as if he was glad to be with her, which was distinctly pleasing to poor unwanted Patricia.

"Well, that was nice of you," she said, still making a pretence of being more interested in what was going on below than in himself.

"Of course," he smiled. "But then I *am* a nice person—when I am with nice people."

Patricia was silent after this subtle compliment. Silence was so often much wiser than speech with Louis Tricoupis. She was never quick enough for his ready wit or for his daring remarks generally. So together they watched the Oriental crowd which had gathered in the street, excitedly awaiting the arrival of the religious procession, consisting chiefly of banner-bearers and leaping and dancing fanatics, whose distant approach was already heralded by the loud chanting of those whose particular and whole duty it was to stir up the dancers and the faithful generally by intoning familiar passages from the Qur'an.

The sympathetic silence between them was broken now and then by some explanatory comment from Louis, to which Patricia listened with her eyes fixed on the scene in front of her. It was only when the tall banners, green and crimson, fierce splashes of colour in the brilliant sunlight, dipped like the lances of our British troops as they passed under the Jaffa Gate, that she put her hand on her companion's arm and said: "Oh, there is a fascination about Islam!"

"Enormous fascination," he answered. "And if this is the first Moslem festival you have seen you won't be disappointed with it, though it is nothing really to some of the others—the feast of the Birthday of the Prophet, for instance, because this particular show in Jerusalem is really held as a rival ceremony to the Greek orthodox Easter. The Moslems nearly always have a rival show when any one of the queer Christian Churches in Jerusalem is having a feast day. They don't like the idea of too many fanatical Christians getting together and having it all their own way—drawing off the faithful to have a look at their goings-on. So they arrange to have a show of their own to coincide which will occupy the minds of their own public, and bring into the city a crowd of the more primitive and fanatical Moslems as a make-weight. Those chanting gentlemen—look!—know quite well what they are doing. It's just like the man who

works up the snake and the mongoose. They're playing on the religious emotions of the people."

Patricia nodded. It was all so terribly interesting that she just couldn't speak. . . . And how nice it was to have Louis Tricoupi with her, to explain it all and to share her appreciation of the more than usually lovely colour effects or some exceptionally resplendent banners heading one of the wealthy and important sects in the procession. How she loved these richly-coloured banners made of the costliest of silks! How dramatic was their effect as they dipped, and dipped, and dipped, and passed on and came out from under the shadow of the Jaffa Gate into the fierce light of the wide road under the high citadel walls. What a mad riot of colour the whole scene made in the great open square!

"They've all been congregated outside the 'Gate of the Friend' since somewhere about sunrise this morning," Louis told her. "For hours their instructors have been rehearsing them."

"Why do you call the Jaffa Gate 'the Gate of the Friend'?" Patricia asked curiously. She liked the name immensely, it was so picturesque, but she had never heard it before.

"Because that is the Arabic name for it," he answered. "They call it that because it leads to Hebron, and the city of Hebron is known to them as El Khaleel—'The Friend.' Abraham is always known by that name in Palestine, and it was, as of course you know, at Hebron that he bought the cave to bury Sarah in. That's why the Jaffa Gate is called 'The Gate of the Friend.' It is Abraham's city."

"I see," she said thoughtfully. "How undying memory is in the East! After all these centuries Abraham isn't one bit forgotten, is he?"

"No, nor ever will be, or his seed for ever."

He broke off to draw her attention to the arrival of the dancers. "Now you will see genuine religious zeal," he exclaimed. "For although I said that these festivals are arranged very cleverly by the leaders of the Moslem world, as counter-attractions to the Christian ones, I didn't mean that the simple people who take part in them are not ardently devout. They don't know anything about the policy and astuteness of their superiors."

Down the middle of the street a clear route had been left for the procession and for the dancers, who were, of course, all men, as were the greater part of the crowd which thronged every point of vantage along the wide open space. The dancers moved slowly along, leaping and yelling and whirling. Their

advance was almost imperceptible, but they did keep moving, for they were never allowed to remain dancing at one spot for long at a time, and the way the mounted police managed them was very reminiscent to Patricia of our own mounted police in some great London procession. Louis pointed out to her that whenever the crowd became too excited by the extra fanatical zeal of some ecstatic dancer he was given the hint to "move on," and this he did without apparently even seeing the police officer mounted on his fine Arab steed. It was all so unobtrusively done that Patricia would never have noticed it if Louis had not pointed it out to her. She was thrilled by the magic of it.

"Isn't it wonderful!" she said. "And doesn't it please you to see British police officers controlling this vast and excited Moslem crowd?" She had forgotten for a moment that Louis was a Greek and not British-born. "Before the war," she went on, "they would have been Turkish police, wouldn't they?"

Tricoupis nodded, and as he did so, the excited Patricia raised her eyes from the procession down on the street to the height of the citadel soaring into the blue directly opposite their balcony.

"I think it must have been just too wonderful," she said, "for the British troops to see the Union Jack, or whatever is the correct British flag, run up on that citadel and float out into that blue sky up there for the first time since—goodness knows? when?" Her voice questioned him.

"Since"—he began, and got no further, for now Patricia was begging him to look at one particularly fanatical dancer who was leaping with the grace of a gazelle and gliding as though his limbs were made of water.

"Look at his eyes," she said, "and at his flying hair! What a grotesque figure he is, and how typical of a desert fanatic! I love him, don't you?"

Louis smiled. "That particular John-the-Baptist," he said, "who looks as though he had lived all his life on locusts and wild honey, is one of our best city policemen. A capital chap to keep order splendidly."

Patricia stared. "A policeman? That mad dancer with scarcely any clothes on, a policeman!"

"Yes," Louis told her. "He is a policeman in Jerusalem for eight months in the year and then gets four months' leave to return to his native village, where he trains up in the way they should go the young men who belong to his peculiarly strict Moslem sect. In a week's time from now you will see him all shaven and shorn and dressed in a British khaki uniform. He's a most invaluable fellow, I'm told."

Patricia laughed, a disappointed laugh. "Oh, you are really a bit of a beast—the way you get to the bed-rock of everything, and knock the romance out of it!"

"But—this is romance!" he protested, "and true romance at that. The Chief of Police here is one of the sanest and wisest of men. He knows the soul of the East as very few Westerners do, and can use the most unlikely material to uphold order and law."

The soul of the East. He knows the soul of the East! Patricia caught at those words. "To know the soul of a thing seems to me to be"—she shrugged her shoulders—"well, rather disillusioning, don't you think?" She spoke despondently.

"But why?" Louis asked in surprise. "Anyhow, why in this instance? That man is absolutely honest and thorough in both his professions—as a policeman and as a Moslem instructor and processional dancer. As a member of the British police force in Jerusalem there isn't his equal, and the chief knows it. That's why he allows him such long leave and countenances his performances at the feasts. He probably thinks—and rightly—that the man's religion means something to him—is a real factor in his life as a policeman as well as in that of a religious fanatic."

"Yes, I can see that," Patricia admitted. "But all the same, I prefer to think of him as a desert fanatic, the prophet among the people, leading a spiritual life always—a Holy Man."

Louis laughed. "All that's the religiously sentimental side of your nature, the side that doesn't like the naked truth, the side that likes to be fed with pretty fables."

"Perhaps so," she said. "I don't know, because—since—since I've been in Palestine I've lost myself. I don't know anything about myself now . . ." She broke off, then added with a forced note of gaiety, "But this isn't the time for introspection, anyhow." She craned her head forward. "I do want to see the very last of the procession, not to talk about myself!"

The end of it was gradually wending its way to the entrance of David Street, and once it had entered that dark and narrow way, Patricia knew that she would have seen the last of it, for its ultimate destination was the Mosque of Omar, the centre of Moslem religious life in Jerusalem. And as it gradually passed into the distance, was no longer a show below their balcony, there was a slackening of their interest in it. Time for their thoughts to turn to more personal matters, a thing

which Patricia was trying to avoid, which she had no desire to court.

"But if I do want to talk about you, don't I deserve any consideration?" Louis smiled. "Don't I deserve to be humoured after giving you all this priceless information? Come on, tell me about yourself. Tell me what you have been doing, how and where you have lost yourself. Who made you lose yourself?"

He looked at her searchingly, but Patricia only answered that part of his question which related to where she had been. She tried to take his remark as wholly impersonal.

Louis Tricoupis was interesting her enormously, far more so than Peter had ever done, almost as greatly as Francis Daubigny always did. But in spite of the fact that her old enjoyment of his beauty was getting hold of her again, making her look at him with the satisfaction and pleasure which every beautiful thing, animate or inanimate, always aroused in her, he had none of the power over her senses which Francis Daubigny possessed. Still, it was undoubtedly pleasant to have him for a companion during the festival, to have his beauty as well as the feast of colour and variety of types on the street below to look at. And Louis took very nice care of her. He screened her face from the glaring sun at no little inconvenience to himself. He contrived to get her an iced lemon squash just when she thought she could bear her thirst no longer.

When the procession was over and the last of the dancers had passed out of sight, he said: "Don't go yet! You must wait until the crowd has dispersed." And it was during that wait, while sitting with him in the deserted salon, that things became more difficult.

"You are changed," he said, quite suddenly. Their eyes met. "Much more of a woman," he added.

"I'm"—she paused—"almost six weeks older!"

"You're a new being," he said calmly. "You've been hurt." Patricia frowned and made a movement.

"No, no," he said. "Don't misunderstand me, or think me impertinently inquisitive. What I mean is—this is just where I come in. Didn't I tell you that the fate which was so kind as to let us meet wasn't going to be so unkind as to part us for ever? Don't you remember my saying that?"

Patricia smiled. He was just the same audacious, fascinating creature as ever. Her smile encouraged him, if encouragement was needed! He went on.

"Well, you see, I was right. Fate has seen fit to let us meet again just when my company and friendship may help you."

He paused, then added lightly : "Soulless mortals like myself have their uses, you see ! "

Her eyes thanked him, unintentionally, for becoming so finely impersonal again, for treating her like a playmate of his own sex.

"Let's try and amuse ourselves," he went on. "Get what we can out of one another. Use me for all you're worth to soothe your hurt."

"I never said I was—hurt."

"You never said anything, but I know. You wouldn't be yourself if I didn't know. Do you think that life isn't going to leave any marks on you ? Do you imagine that your sensitive little face is going to remain impervious to the wounds on your soul ? "

"I thought you said we hadn't any souls," she parried.

"Oh, come ! " he said. "When did I say that ? I said that I have managed to disregard the uncomfortable part of mine. Didn't I say, 'Better never to have been, but now we are here, let us make the best of things ' ? If I hadn't a soul I'd be like the animals, who have never considered the desirableness or otherwise of existence."

She laughed. "You're getting beyond me. I'm not clever."

"No, I'm not. You're only pretending. You know that I believe in cultivating the Greek soul, the enjoyment of beauty, the aristocracy of brains. And I believe that this meeting—your coming across me just at this particular crisis in your development—is more than a delightful coincidence . . . and it is delightful, to me at any rate."

He rose from his seat at her side and went to the piano—not a bad instrument, because the manager of the hotel was passionately fond of music.

Louis Tricoupis played to Patricia as she had never been played to before. He interpolated into the harmonies his understanding of her loneliness. No words could have spoken more plainly to her, as she sat motionless, listening, with her eyes riveted on the floor.

Her seething senses were lulled, her pity for herself taken from her. She was no longer alone. Human sympathy and understanding throbbed in every note Louis Tricoupis played.

He rose from the piano and stood looking down at her. "That is what has happened," he said. "Now I am going to play you what is going to happen."

He went back, and his fingers strayed over the keys in some melody which she did not know, something which began quite quietly, with a lingering note of the sadness of the last

thing he had played still haunting it. But gradually the sadness gave place to a suggestion of gaiety, though with the wistful note still discernible, until at last it died away in a triumphant song of happiness. The spontaneity and gaiety of the air was delightful. Patricia laughed, and at the sound of her mirth Louis Tricoupi sprang from his chair, and held out his hands in a disarmingly artless manner.

"We will be kind to each other!" he cried eagerly. "Amuse each other until we need each other no longer! Yes?"

And so it was settled, not by Patricia saying a word, but by her urgent need of his enchanting company. Why should she refuse it? Why deny herself such a simple pleasure when no one else wanted her?—wanted her enough to make any sacrifice for her? Why not play with Louis Tricoupi, who only asked for her society until she had no more need of him?

CHAPTER XXXIV

HER need of Louis grew greater every day, from the moment when he had watched with her the Moslem festival of Birham. Followed on that, excursions to Hebron and Beersheba and Jericho, and all the other Biblical places which she had only as yet visited in a superficial way, and which she would not now have enjoyed alone; and then, as a natural sequence, there grew a dependence upon his society in all sorts of ways. For the pity of it was that he proved himself such splendid company, as interesting as he was amusing, which was saying a good deal, making clear to her things that would have had no meaning otherwise, and doing it almost as delightfully as did Francis Daubigny, until at last she came to tell herself over and over again that Louis was quite as nice as Francis, quite as good and interesting a companion—and really cleverer.

Clever he was, without doubt. As clever as a monkey. There seemed to be nothing he could not do, from the trimming of her new shady hat with the *chic* of a French milliner, to the

telling of Bible stories with so much vividness that the field of Boaz became the actual stage of a living drama, and Ruth and Naomi flesh-and-blood heroines. This was while they were seated together in the very field of that queer courtship.

And again there was that wonderful day in Hebron, the place where Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite the Cave of Machpelah wherein to bury his beloved Sarah. Louis acted the whole of that typically Oriental scene for her benefit, and made it so exactly like the scenes of bargaining which she had watched, and even taken part in, in the bazaars and native shops of Jerusalem, that she laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks.

Father Abraham, in Louis's comedy, was a present-day sheik bargaining for an expensive cloak; the astute Hittite was the salesman, versed in a fine palaver. . . . They were friends. The cloak was not to be sold, it was a gift. No such sordid thing as money must enter into the discussion. What was a little matter of six pounds as compared with the pleasure of giving so honourable a friend a trifling gift? . . . But the true Oriental that was Abraham took the cue. That six pounds was the sum the salesman desired for his cloak. All that blarney and palaver was so much eyewash, to be taken as such. The cloak was to be paid for, and a receipted bill handed over to the purchaser.

Louis Tricoupis did the bargaining, the deep obeisance of Abraham, and the honied insincerity of the Hittite, to the very life, in voices, gestures and speech. It made the past live again in the present, it showed Patricia how unchanging is the heart of the East; showed her that trams didn't matter, electric light didn't matter, motor-cars didn't matter, for these things were all on the surface, a light veneer of Western civilisation. Abraham still bargains with the Hittite. Ruth still gleans in the fields and obeys her mother-in-law's strange code of family morals. John-the-Baptists still spring out of the wilderness to proclaim the coming of the Messiah.

Yes, Louis Tricoupis was as good an interpreter of the East as Francis Daubigny, and even better, for his Greek ancestry gave him a closer affinity to Oriental civilisations. Patricia might not be in love with him—indeed, she knew she was not—might not even be able to make herself care for him as a lover, but she certainly found him a delightful companion, and her need of him became greater when, after a considerable length of time, according to the pace lived by young people of their generation, she allowed their attitude of Platonic friendship to deepen into an apparent love-affair.

She let Louis kiss her for the first time when she was physically tired and he was very kind and very close to her in a closed

motor-car, comfortingly close and supporting. And it goes without saying that this first kiss was but the forerunner of many others—for is a first kiss ever the last with a girl as kissable as Patricia and a man so versed in the art of love-making as Louis Tricoupi? A man, moreover, so good-looking that Patricia told herself a pillar of salt would like to be kissed by him if it had once been a woman. And of course it was only natural that they should fall into the modern "kissing-habit," these two goodly young people who were spending their long bright days together, driving together through flower-bright Palestine, laughing together at all the dear silliness they saw there and nearly weeping together at the tragedies and makeshifts of poverty, worshipping Our Lady of Poverty through the sufferings and patience of her children. How could they help it, I ask you, when kisses came as spontaneously to their natures as their smiles and their tears?

And yet it was because of this first kiss and the kisses that were to follow that Patricia's need of Louis became daily greater. She needed the charm of his lips and of his presence to drive away the scorn she felt for herself when he was not there. She needed him to protect her from herself and the insistent little spark that would persist in flickering up to burn her. She needed him by her to keep her light-hearted, and to chase away care.

And he managed to do these things because he was gay, and because he understood the light side of her nature which loved and craved for gaiety. But, seasoned from his cradle in knowledge of the eternal feminine, he did not at first go further than these light kisses of joyous comradeship. He was content to bide his time without rushing things. Biding his time with headlong Patricia meant, of course, proceeding pretty rapidly for a duller and slower temperament; still, after that first kiss, when he knew that she had in a sense given in, he continued, like Agag, to walk delicately. He comforted her with gentle endearments, but never alarmed her by trying too suddenly to ensnare her passions or in any way betraying his own. He was, as she expressed it, "just kindness itself and frightfully nice to kiss." He was working upon her senses so subtly that eventually her need of him would be too great for her powers of resistance, and she would fall in with his plan, respond to his passion.

Yes, Louis Tricoupi was as clever as a monkey—as artful as a whole cartload of them!

He knew that Patricia was not likely ever to be what she called "in love" with him. The possibility of such a state of things would indeed have acted on him as a deterrent, since in his philosophy being in love was tantamount to being bored,

eventually. It generally meant tragedy or domestic boredom for one or other of the romantic couple. Or so he thought. . . . But certainly he wanted her to love him, with a love quite free from all domestic trammels of monotony and intimacy. He desired her to want him and to love him in the same way that he already loved and wanted her. To love him as some beautiful and new experience in her life ; love his physical perfection as he loved hers, love his intellectual companionship as he would love feeding from his own stores of knowledge her starved and hungry mind.

They could do so much for one another. He told her that, and it flattered her. They could do so much for each other's development, until their mutual need, physical and intellectual, should cease . . . And as they were both absolutely free, why not ?

"Don't ask the impossible of human love," he urged her, "and you won't be disappointed. Your pretty mouth won't lose its softness." He had said this to her over and over again. "Don't put all your eggs in one basket!" Which meant, of course, "Don't lavish all your passion and affections on one man. Keep some of it for the man who is to be the best, whom fate will see fit to give you as a substitute for the best." . . . And oh, dear little Patricia, remember that the best is so often the worst in disguise !

Besides these things, he many times spoke frankly to her about the different women he had loved and lived with; spoke of them affectionately and appreciatively. And Patricia could not make herself feel shocked at this outspokenness, because he never said anything to her which could be considered in the least shocking. Far from it, for he declared that he had never lived with or loved any woman from whose society he had not derived immense benefit. This was, of course, because it was contrary to his nature to find pleasure in the society or the love of a woman whom he could not respect, and it goes without saying that he never respected any woman the less for living with him and loving him. He told Patricia that in every instance their desire to part had been mutual and instinctive. When the flame of their passion had burnt low, as it was bound eventually to do, they scorned the idea of continuing the intimacy.

"Don't turn Romance into a habit. That is an ugly sin, little girl," he would say. Once, he told her, he had loved a woman so greatly and gloriously that he had determined to say good-bye to her while the flame of their passion was at its brightest. "I wished to keep that one memory undimmed," he said tenderly, "but we both suffered agonies"—he spoke

sincerely. "It was awful to relinquish each other, but we both knew that afterwards we should be glad. We were both aware that the flame must eventually burn low, that it was only a matter of time. And so we parted, gave ourselves that agony so as to keep for ever that glorious memory."

His transparently blue eyes looked weirdly pale at the moment against the darkness of his thick lashes and the pallor of his skin. This was a new Louis whose confidences had been given to her as they were walking over the stony field where Jesus once saw a man sowing peas.

"What are you sowing there, my friend?" Jesus asked him, and the man's answer was, "Stones." "Then stones you will reap," said Jesus.

The words of the parable came back to Patricia as Louis told her about this strange love-affair cut short in its prime. Their love was stones, and so they could but gather stones. Her own love for Louis was stones—but then she did not hope to gather peas!

"We both knew what we were doing," Louis went on, as he turned to look at the thoughtful face beside him. "We held no sentimental views about love." He laughed. "And believe me, little girl—and I don't tell lies; I have always found that truth is so much more effective, so far more interesting!—I have never broken any hearts, and I'm not trying to break yours. I just want you to try and patch yours up, I want you to let me help you."

Patricia smiled, he was so frankly pagan. What was the use of thinking about the parable of the sower with Louis Tricoupis beside her? He didn't want to reap peas, he wanted nothing in return for the sowing of his wild oats.

"You know you couldn't break it," she said lightly. "One couldn't break one's heart for the sake of a lizard!"

"Exactly, that's where the splendidness of our plan comes in—in our lack of humbug with each other, our absence of self-deceit."

Patricia laughed outright at his ruthless candour.

"You and I will part," he said, "just as Laura and I parted. Oh, but she had a fine brain! How I missed it!" He looked at her. "You too have a brain worth developing, but so far you've done nothing with it."

"I"—Patricia hesitated.

"I'll make you do something with it," he said. "I'll help you to be what you were intended by Nature to be—and then, when we part with a lovely memory of each other, your mind will be worthy of your sweet body."

He was looking at her searchingly. "Of course you are too English and too unsophisticated to know how much you have been spared—yes, a very great deal!—with your undeveloped mind and your sentimental British outlook upon life." He paused. "Lovely Daphne," he added, "you will live to be thankful that time and custom have never robbed you of your youthful ideal, that the man you loved and wanted never became the man whom the intimacy and boredom of domestic life made practically undesirable. The man you love now can, fortunately, never become the man with whom you have to live whether you want him or not. Patricia, dear heart, it's awful what every-day domestic routine can do for Romance, how quickly it can kill passion."

Patricia was just sufficiently annoyed to remain petulantly silent. She objected strongly to these shots of his in the dark. She had never spoken to him about her love for Francis and its untoward fate, nor did she want to. But Louis was clever enough to ignore both her silence and her annoyance, and went on calmly talking out his subject.

"And that is what life does for us all, little girl," he said tenderly. "when we ask too much of it. It just says: 'Well, if you are such a silly fool, if you are so ignorant of human nature, take what you want and be damned to you. Eat sweets until you are sick.'"

He had always read her mind like a book, and read it not without genuine pity.

And Patricia was labouring under no delusion as to his feelings for her or her own feelings for him. In fact, she rather underrated his character. She did not know that he had his own code of morals—that for one thing he would never let any woman down. From the very first she had known, subconsciously, where their friendship was leading her, and so by the time he saw fit to lay his plans before her and skilfully urge her to accept what the gods were kind enough to offer them both—a very excellent substitute for the best, which she could not get—poor despondent Patricia was in no wise surprised at his suggestions, nor did she even pretend to be shocked. As Louis put it, the idea was not, indeed, shocking, merely an extremely attractive and practical common-sense arrangement, entirely free from the vulgarity of an ordinary sordid intrigue. But what love-intrigue is ever vulgar or sordid to the participants?

Her days in Jerusalem since her return from Mount Carmel and her parting with Miss Cresswell had been subtly leading up to this climacteric. Peter had taken himself off to Lebanon. Their next meeting would be in London. Francis Daubigny had

vanished into the blue. No "next meeting" to be looked for with him. Patricia was utterly alone and friendless. Small wonder then that her need of Louis and his kindness and sympathy were daily and hourly becoming more and more insistent. It was now almost impossible to endure her loneliness without him. And Louis *was* kind to her, kind and very gentle, because it was natural to him to be kind to all lovely and lonely things, and because it gave him a delicious pleasure to be kind to her for her own sweet sake. And who among the many he had loved could be sweeter than Patricia, with her dangerous responsiveness, her facile joyousness of temperament? She was so youthfully pleased with quite small pleasures, for she had never been spoilt by bigger things or by a surfeit of the hollowest thing on earth—the round of social gaieties in so-called "smart" society in London.

Those country picnics with Louis Tricoupis made her as gay and happy as a child, while the queer things he was able to show her in the native quarters of the city led her to overrate his individuality. They were things she could never have seen without him, but they were at the same time things with which he could not fail to be familiar, because of his knowledge of Oriental life and languages. And, alas, Patricia was only too easily adaptable. She was quickly learning to accept Louis' point of view about everything, or more truly, perhaps, to *understand* his point of view, which was never the usual and conventional one. And it was because it was genuinely his point of view, because he really did see life like that, looked at it from a different angle, and by so doing managed greatly to enjoy it, that his unorthodox opinions and actions never shocked her; more often, indeed, pleased her.

Besides—and at the moment this meant much to Patricia—he never professed one thing and did another. If he was, as he often declared himself to be, a professed pagan, a throw-back to his ancient Greek ancestors, he would never, she felt sure, allow the mediæval ritual and teaching of the Church to control his actions and limit his mental outlook. What he had said to her on that eventful day in Hebron was quite true: he would gladly exchange any one of the Apostles for Apollo, if the exchange would give back to the world the gaiety that was Greece, the philosophy of the Greek mind.

But to get the perspective of their characters properly, you must visualise that goodly young couple all alone on the heights of Hebron, visualise them looking out over the country where David must have watched his father's sheep.

"Some poet, David," Louis had said meditatively; "and

while we are here let us accept him without query as the author of the Psalms."

Patricia smiled. "I always do. That's quite easy!"

"This is the scenery which must have inspired some of his loveliest verses," Louis went on. And then to her surprise he recited the beautiful opening lines of the hundred and thirty seventh Psalm.

"Oh, do go on with it!" she exclaimed. Her face became a lovely crimson. She was forgetting so quickly, she had no strength of character—perhaps she could have sung gay songs in a strange land if some stranger had been kind to her.

"*If I remember thee not*," Louis was reciting, "*If I prefer not Jerusalem . . . They that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.* Yes," he added, "those are great lines—Songs of Zion in a strange land. David knew."

"Poor captives!" Patricia said. "They were to sing their dear songs of Zion, songs of gladness, to amuse their captors!" She looked at Louis. "And David was musician enough to know that you just can't sing songs of gladness when your heart is full of sorrow!"

It was this incident that brought forth Louis' remark about Apollo and the Apostles, and as he made it he looked at Patricia for response. But she kept her eyes fixed on the landscape which he told her must have inspired the royal singer with all his most beautiful ideas and metaphors. She was pretending to herself that she was really visualising the lovely figure of the youthful David as he dreamily watched his father's sheep browsing contentedly on Hebron, but what she was really wondering was whether the world, the awakened world of to-day, would ever get back its youthful gaiety and the laughter of life which she too loved and longed for, get back its honestly pagan soul. Would the "damned little spark" allow it to do so?

Her serious moods were not to be encouraged, and Louis spoke again, interrupting her thoughts, sweeping away her silence.

"I find Socrates more in keeping with my mind and temperament than the Apostles," he said. "And even he brought more gravity than I care for into the world. He startled the world of his day pretty badly, made them feel for the first time their spiritual responsibility, angered them by declaring that a man's soul is a man's conscious self. But even so, Socrates was level-headed. He had so much commonsense that his moral teachings were splendidly far removed from the supernatural doctrines of the Christian Church, with its magic and its ritual."

Patricia's attention was arrested, as he had intended it to be.

The gay Louis Tricoupis was speaking seriously again. He was in earnest, and his mood appealed to her own at the moment.

"Socrates," he went on, "taught men to think of themselves as being souls, not as possessing souls, souls which required to be saved by a supernatural agency. In fact, to quote the Gentleman with the Duster, 'he naturalised the supernatural.' His burning passion was to make men honest."

"Oh!" Patricia said impetuously, "have you been reading 'The Seven Ages'?"

Her look of pleased surprise amused him, he read its meaning correctly. The man she loved had evidently been reading it, and had spoken of it to her. What an artless child she was at heart!

"Yes," he said, "it's rather one of the books of the day, isn't it? I liked his chapter on Socrates."

He paused. He wasn't going to ask her anything about her hero of romance or lead her to think him intellectually original or widely read, and so he went on with his original theme.

"Socrates didn't give people teachings and beliefs which he knew they could never put into practice, he was too honest for that. It's pretty awful, isn't it, the way in which Christian ethics have always gone to the wall with the men who have been held responsible for their country's safety and commercial development? Remember, it was the Christian nations that were at war with each other in the recent Armageddon. Christians who did everything they could to incite their soldiers to kill one another."

"Oh—but"—Patricia spoke hotly—"how could we help it? What else *could* we do?"

"Of course," he answered, "we couldn't help it. The situation was produced by the rotten state of civilisation. But my point is that, this being so, why talk about Christianity? Why talk about turning the other cheek to the smiter and loving one's enemies and doing good to those who spitefully use one, if it is to mean nothing at all when these momentous situations arise; if we are only to follow these idealistic teachings when we are not risking very much by doing so?"

"Yes, but," hazarded Patricia, "remember He also said, 'I come not to bring peace but a sword.' What do you make of that?"

"Oh, just nothing," he said lightly; "I make nothing of it at all, it's all so contradictory. I told you I was a pagan! I prefer the more honest and possible ethics of Socrates, the less contradictory, if you like. But as I belong to a Western civilisation, it is a little disconcerting to find that the war made

that civilisation—our so-called Christianity—a laughing-stock to the East. We proved that our religion did not wash, that nationality comes first."

Patricia's eyes were now graver than those of her companion. How similar were these sentiments to those which Francis Daubigny had put forward as his own. He had spoken of these same things just like that. He had once said to her that the worst thing about Christianity was that it didn't produce Christians.

Louis tickled her cheeks with a feathery grass.

"Laugh!" he said. "I prefer your dimples to your frowns! You were never meant to be serious. Thinking spoils your darling mouth—and it *is* such a darling."

He scrutinised it whimsically. "It's wickedly provocative. A positive danger to mankind."

"Oh," Patricia cried, "can't you be serious for more than five minutes, or believe that I can be?"

He looked at her laughingly, tauntingly, and yet tenderly.

"I don't care a damn about my mouth or what you think of it!"

"Oh, pretty liar!" he reproved. "You know you care tremendously. If you had a moustache you would go into a convent. And I am never serious, for very long, because I suppose if I am anything at all I am a Hedonist. And so are you, beloved Daphne, only you don't know it, because in all probability you don't know anything about your real self."

By the strength of his will he forced her to look straight into his eyes, and there she saw, as a part of their queer beauty, so much tenderness for herself, and so much kindly understanding of her true need of him, that she forgave him. And with her forgiving came her smile, that "maddening smile," as Francis Daubigny called it, which set the Greek blood dancing through Louis Tricoupis' pagan veins. He was master enough of himself, however, to walk warily, not to betray for one moment his desire for her in such a way as would check her unconscious groping towards it.

Passionate as he knew her to be, she was, as he also knew, a purist. A lover's passions must be camouflaged with the beauty of romance, or at least with the uplift of intellectual affinity, mental mating.

"My most lovely Daphne," he said, "can you tell me what being a Hedonist means?"

"I'd like you to tell *me*," she said, "if you *can*!"

"Now" that's because you don't know one bit, although you are one yourself. Even more one than I am!" he told her.

"A Hedonist," he went on, with mock seriousness, "is one who believes in the doctrine that pleasure is the chief good in life. The word is taken, my child, from the Greek *hedonē*—a fact which you will forget at once."

His shoulders moved imperceptibly as he said to himself: "But upon my word it's no easy matter to be a Hedonist with all these centuries of gloomy thought and misery-loving minds behind one, and with all the joy-killers around! . . . You do believe in the power of mind upon mind, don't you?" he added aloud, abruptly.

"Of course I do!" Was not his mind exercising its power over hers every hour of the day? "But why do you think I'm a Hedonist?" she went on, harking back to the original topic of conversation. "I'm sure I haven't had too much pleasure in my life." She spoke with an offended, head-in-the-air touch of dignity. "I don't see why you should label me—a Hedonist!"

He laughed. "Because the label is no libel, my Daphne. Because you are one, and until a very short time ago you hadn't done any thinking, and you are only just beginning to think now. Because your only real desire in life is to get pleasure—the pleasure that you can't have. You can't deny it. Yes, Daphne dear, you would sacrifice anything—anything in the world—to get that pleasure. You would send your Christian soul to blazes to get it. And I love you for it. I love you tremendously for it, little Hedonist!"

She was in his arms. It was his human understanding that sent her into them. Alas, Patricia! So soon other arms than those of her true love were comforting her, and physically soothing her.

And while they soothed her and made her forget, did the quick Tricoupis with his Greek mind recall to himself poor Andromache's words to Hecuba when she was being taken from the arms of her adored Hector and given as one of the spoils of war to Achilles' son, sent to him as his share of the loot.

" . . . Shall I thrust aside
Hector's beloved face, and open wide
My heart to this new lord? Oh! I should stand
A traitor to the dead! And if my hand
And flesh shrink from him . . . lo, wrath and despit•
O'er all the house, and I a slave!"

And then, with the philosophical Greek mind, the poor wife, the victim of war, adds the words whose truth she so dreaded.

Did Louis recall them? Did Patricia whisper to herself: "If I remember thee not, if I prefer not Jerusalem"?—Did Louis say to himself:

" . . . One night,
One night—aye, men have said it—maketh tame
A woman in a man's arms—oh, shame, shame!
What woman's lips can so forswear her dead
As give strange kisses in another's bed?
Why, not a dumb beast, not a colt will run
In yoke untroubled when her mate is gone—
A thing not in God's image, dull, unmoved
Of reason . . . "

Did Louis recall these immortal lines as he led Patricia to a rock where in silence they sat down?

Patricia had surrendered. She had extinguished the "little spark." What he now proposed she would eventually do, though as yet, of course, her objective self did not acknowledge this.

"Now, wouldn't it be a wise thing to be as good Hedonists as we can?" he said. "Can you see any real reason why we shouldn't? Why either you or I shouldn't take what pleasure life offers?" He looked at her always sensitive face, then added more seriously: "Especially when we can do it without hurting or offending anyone else, anyone who belongs to us. We have such unusual good luck in being free-lances."

Patricia's pale face crimsoned. She at least would be hurting someone else—and oh, how grievously it would hurt him, if ever he came to know!

"Can you see any reason why we shouldn't take all the pleasure we can get out of life?" Louis urged.

Patricia temporised for a moment. "What sort of pleasure?" she said slowly. "Would your pleasure be mine?" Her voice was low, husky from nervousness.

"You know what I mean!" he cried. "You have always known! I want you to come with me to Crete and to Athens. I want you to enjoy the pleasure of those visits with me. And surely it would be a pleasure? And why shouldn't you?" he continued, answering her silence. "Why on earth not, when you know you would love it—when there isn't anything to prevent it. When I am not too bad a substitute for the lover you can't get!"

"I don't know why," she said breathlessly. "Oh, I really

don't logically see why not. There isn't any practical or real reason why I shouldn't go with you—no reason at all—except that . . . I can't. I know I can't!"

The real reason, which was gradually being smothered by Louis' materialistic philosophy, was, of course, the fact that she would be making herself less worthy of Francis Daubigny's higher love—but this she was trying to ignore. She continued to protest without formulating any reason, even to herself.

"I just can't. I just can't!" She repeated the words with the intention of persuading herself that they were final. "I can't!"

"Oh, but you can! You *are* coming!" Louis said magnificently. "Of course you are!" He put his arms triumphantly round her. "I knew you would come that day on the *Helouan* when I told you that we were going to play together on Mount Ida."

Patricia was trembling for herself, horribly apprehensive of her own weakness of will beside his strength. She allowed him to hold her, and to kiss her troubled face, however, and Louis Tricoupis was a fine artist in the ways of love. Experience left him in no doubt about the girl he was wooing, about the upshot of the struggle. Her sensitive temperament required clever handling, that was all. He enjoyed dealing with it. It interested him, while at the same time it kindled his desire. And he was so great a devotee of beauty that even to gain his own ends he would not vilify the lovely thing he knew their love could be. The refinement of passion in Patricia was the part of her which, to him, was the most enchanting, and to turn the tide of those refined passions from her lost lover to himself required all the fine skill of his artistry. He must play on the subtlest and finest chords of her being, never scorn her youthful sentiments, never assume that he himself could at any time really take the place of the Unknown in her heart—and it was like his self-engrossed nature not to trouble about who the man was or why he and Patricia were separated. He took it for granted that she was as selfish as himself, as true a Hedonist—or at least, that he would soon make her so. Unselfish people were disconcerting companions, they cherished uncomfortable views, made gay living a poor grey thing.

And so that afternoon on Hebron was the beginning of the last act in the drama. Louis' way was paved. He was indeed surprised to find that there was less real resistance to be overcome than he had anticipated. He had not reckoned sufficiently on the potent factor of loneliness, Patricia's sense of unwantedness, her anger against all conventions and religious laws. He

had come along with his proposal of an adventure together at a moment singularly apt, psychologically, at the very time when her ignorance and her youth made her eager to do something to "pay back" Fate for its cruel treatment of her, to "pay back" the Church for what it had taken from her. If she went with Louis, it would prove to Francis how greatly she scorned his state of spiritual bondage. And Louis was not asking her to tie herself to him for life. He was only asking her to go a trip with him to a country where she could not go alone—to go off with him for their mutual enjoyment and to the detriment of no one else. What was the use of woman's new independence if it did not enable a girl to enjoy life as young unmarried men enjoyed theirs?

The surrender of Patricia Paget did not take form or become an accomplished fact all at once, of course. That day on the heights of Hebron saw no more than the beginning of things, but nevertheless the first step was taken then towards that eventful journey, and oddly enough, it was taken in the most anti-Christian city in Palestine.

On one of the occasions when Louis was simplifying matters for her, assuring her that unless she so wished it no one need ever know of their escapade, that neither in Asia Minor nor in Greece would they be likely to come across any of their friends, that the story of that portion of her travels could be left out when she got back to England, he saw a pink flush tint the girl's magnolia pallor. . . . Yes, Patricia was blushing, because while he spoke she knew that again he was reading her thoughts like an open book, passing in review her secret fears and anxieties. Oh, it was horrible the way he could do that, pry into her inmost soul, understand all her reservations.

"But none of these things will happen, little girl," he said tenderly. "Yes, I know, I understand. But believe me, you need not be afraid, they won't happen."

Patricia's eyes dropped, her face now was exquisitely flamed. How deliciously unmodern Louis thought her. Bobbed hair, knees showing, and all the rest of the up-to-date fashions, and with it all a bit of the best of the last century. Any other modern girl would have been out with it frankly, would have said: "But people can have babies even if they don't have wedding rings or ceremonies!" But here was this wild thing, this passionate would-be modern girl, blushing deliciously because of her most natural thoughts upon the subject.

This was the part of Patricia which was so tenderly appealing. And yet equally characteristic of her was the easy satisfaction of her anxiety, her unquestioning belief in his assurance. She

knew so little about things of that sort that it was an easy matter to take his word for them ; and certainly, so far, he had proved no liar, because, as he had once said, he had always found that the truth interested people much more than fiction, startled them more, and was generally more effective.

It is strange how quickly an astonishing idea ceases to astonish. Patricia had quite ceased to be astonished at Louis' proposal that they should go off together on this Hedonist honeymoon. What she never did become accustomed to was the fact that she had fallen in with his wild scheme. That remained to the end a thing too astoundingly unbelievable. It was, indeed, the very astoundingness of her own surrender that carried things through with her. It was so exciting and so daring, so brave of her to break out like this, to throw convention overboard, after her conventional life with her aunt. It inflamed her imagination because of its abandonment, because of its scorn of all social laws and accepted opinions. The daring of it intoxicated her. The independence of it flattered her belief in her own independence of character. Yet there was not really one scrap of independence in her. It was, indeed, her very lack of that quality, her sheer dependence upon some force outside herself, that had made Louis' proposal at all possible. She depended so much upon human sympathy and human love ; why not take what had so obviously been sent to her to atone for her loss of Francis Daubigny ?

People like Miss Cresswell, who would say that Louis had probably been sent at this psychological moment to test her, to develop her powers of resistance and her spiritual being, were fools past listening to, their God a Devil. What cruel means to an end ! Could anyone love such a God or look to Him for help ? Would any helpful being plan to attack a girl in her most defenceless state, would any earthly father who cared one rap about his child put such strong temptation in her way, especially when he knew that she was not in a fit condition to withstand it ? The idea was a blasphemy. It might not be *right* to do what she was going to do, according to the codes of our Western civilisation, but to say that the temptation had been purposely put in her way to test her was enough to turn anyone's heart from the God who was supposed to do it.

As the days quickly passed her grievance against Francis Daubigny increased. In Louis Tricoupi's company she learned to think bitterly of his absurd scruples, to treat them as nothing but ridiculous British pigheadedness. And Louis had proved that by strength of will the unconquerable "little spark" could be conquered. It belonged, he told her, primarily to northern

temperaments. Religion, like so many other things, was climatic as well as temperamental.

She had also come to feel by now that her good-bye to Francis Daubigny on the heights of Carmel had been final, that no intensity of longing for her would bring him to her, that his want of her would never weaken his resistance ; and with her gradual acceptance of this bitter truth Louis' success was assured. She found it less difficult to throw her timid scruples to the winds and dance to the tune of his pan-pipes with a superior sense of extreme broadmindedness and modernity.

On the particular evening which was to be their last until they met again at the port of Piræus, Louis Tricoupis was very adorable and soothing. Yes, she was certainly very fond of him, so really fond that when he said to her : " Little Daphne, do you love your poor substitute just a weeny bit ? Does he mean anything to you ? " she answered impetuously : " Oh, Apollo ! You mean so much, you are such a darling to me that I can't do without you ! "

" And you won't pray to your mother Terra to open her arms and receive you into them before we meet ? You won't let her console me for your loss by the creation of a laurel tree ? My modern Daphne will play the game by me, will she not ? "

Patricia laughed. " No fear of any tricks, Apollo ; I promise you ! I certainly haven't any desire for the earth to open and swallow me. I dread earthquakes—and laurel trees always remind me of stodgily respectable suburban gardens ! And I don't want to get away from you, truly I don't. I hate your leaving me now." Her eyes entreated him. " Must you ? "

" Must ! " he assured her earnestly. " We can't leave Jerusalem together, don't you see ? You must cover your tracks. Appear to be going home, sailing for Trieste. But," he smiled tenderly, " you are going to get off at the Piræus first, and postpone your arrival in London indefinitely. Just a day or two of separation and then our joyous meeting and the great adventure ! "

They said good-bye, these two would-be Hedonists, on the roof of the Casa Nova, where for the last time they were watching the sun set over the city, their faces Zionwards, looking out over the jumble of roofs and spires and minarets, while they arranged the details of their pagan adventure, making ready to shake the dust of Apostolic tradition from their feet and go off together to the playground of the Olympian gods, eager to get away from the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Who had sent into the world, through Jesus of Nazareth, the little spark . . . that damned little spark, that kill-joy little thing, that

acquisitive little thing which had taken both Francis and Peter from Patricia—that little flame which Louis Tricoupi was teaching her how to smother.

CHAPTER XXXV

Louis' calm acceptance of her momentous decision did not surprise Patricia, and if it certainly caused her some slight annoyance, it also helped her to come to the conclusion that she was making too much of the sexual side of this Hedonist adventure, treating it too much as an ordinary love-affair, dragging that side of it into undue prominence as its dominating feature. It was, of course, her narrower outlook which made her unable to enter into the spirit of the thing wholly from Louis' more modern standpoint.

He was too sane, too exquisitely well-balanced in mind and in body to see beauty or find pleasure in anything which was out of proportion, distorted by want of balance. He was like a Greek athlete, a competitor at Olympia, whose perfect body was a sacred trust, the perfection of its training in every way a reflection of the divine soul within.

Louis was so unlike any other man she had ever known, so casual, so indifferent to the accepted codes of thought, and yet so serious upon the subject of "living beautifully." He was amusing, too, extremely entertaining. She simply dared not let this glittering dragon-fly flit uncaught across the greyness of her life and just pass out of it, leaving her to the old flatness and conventionality. His beauty alone—and oh, he was beautiful, so flawless and yet so virile, so lovely and yet so masculine!—made him worth possessing, even for a little time.

She smiled. Ah, yes! Just for a little time—for even Louis' beauty could not be to her "a joy for ever." He himself had said so. His beauty, still extraordinary, with its glittering allure of health and the glorious colouring of youth, was bound to become ordinary to accustomed eyes.

But Patricia could not help wishing that he had recognised the amount of moral courage on her part which it had taken to make her promise to meet him in Athens. A weaker girl than

herself, she thought, would have wanted to go and yet would have clung to the easier path of conventionality and safety, not for virtue's sake but from fear of the unknown, the untraditional. It would have been far easier and less nerve-racking to have gone back to England with Miss Cresswell. It would also have been duller and deadlier, as all conventional virtues are, but even so, much easier, for a girl like Patricia who did not in any sense belong to the up-to-date class of modern society girls. She did not even use their twentieth-century language ; she did not know it ; her English was pretty much that of pre-war England, and if from sheer "cussedness" she occasionally said "damn!" she was certainly wholly unfamiliar with the expletives, and still more the adjectives in daily use in polite society. She had never heard them used by educated gentlewomen. As has been said before, in spite of Patricia's modern figure and dress, and her general appearance, even the appearance of her pretty knees when she sat down, she was by no means a modern girl. Her school of upbringing had not qualified her for mixing easily in the cocktail-drinking and dance-mad society of the 'twenties. She really knew nothing about its ways from personal experience. When she read about them in the most popular novels of the day she used to wonder if they really existed, if they were actually to be found in any decent society. But as writers of both sexes described them so very vividly, she supposed that they did exist, merely concluding happily that they were only dirty drops in buckets of clean English water. They made a great splash and caused people to talk, because rubbish always floats, but they must mean very little really, or she would have come personally in contact with one or two specimens, and she had never met one at any social function to which she had ever been. She had never met girls who drank cocktails in the daytime, danced through the hours of every night in the week, and used "bloody" as an ordinary adjective. And yet—well, the last two clever novels she had read were about girls who used that illiterate adjective as their mothers might have used "horrid" or "tiresome" or "bothering." And moreover, these heroines—society girls and student girls and brainy girls—had lovers—lovers in the sense in which Louis Tricoupis was to be her lover—and thought nothing about it. . . . But there must still be a far larger proportion of girls who would simply not be able to do what she was going to do without a tremendous struggle, a fierce fight against tradition and their British racial regard for feminine virtue ; and so it was just a bit hard, she thought, that Louis should not have shown her that he realised and appreciated the big step she was taking.

That he knew that she was by no means lacking in purity, in what is called virtue, she was certain, because she sensed pretty shrewdly that if this had not been so, the Hedonist holiday would not have been suggested. That was Louis all over. He loved the beauty of purity as greatly as the beauty of all other things, nor did he confound innocence with ignorance, or lack of temptation with moral rectitude. But Louis knew what Patricia did not, that she attracted him as greatly by the charm of her fine though latent intellectual ability, by her promise of a finer self in after years—which was a very sure promise, if her temperament was given what it needed at this critical period of her life. He knew that once her physical needs and her youthful reaching-out for romance had been ministered to, when that natural and healthy appetite of her first blooming had been satisfied, the deeper qualities of her nature would assert themselves. Her fine brain—and it was fine, and oh, so intellectually inquisitive and acquisitive!—would get its chance. It would cease to be submerged and thwarted by the demands of the physical side of her. He knew that it was because of her physical fineness as a healthily developed young woman that these years of love-hunger were so exacting.

Louis knew, as all truly human men and women know, that it is, broadly speaking, the nicest and largest-natured girls who "go wrong," as parish workers used to express the situation in the days when Right was Right and Wrong was Wrong and this sharp distinction was the correct one, no matter what circumstances had produced the lapse from the moral code of their period. He knew that they "go wrong" just because of their very quality, because they are the nicest and the finest girls, because nothing about them is little or lukewarm, because, being built on big lines, they possess big wants; because, like Patricia, they quite unconsciously long to give and be given; because although they may have splendid brains, they are, before all else, fine young animals, and this being the case, their development as conscious individuals and their good brains have to wait until their animal bodies have eaten and drunk and are ready to take a back seat. And the damned thing is, as Louis had expressed it, that to be able to eat only the good of that particular tree of life and not the evil is no such easy matter for an exclusively-reared girl like Patricia. Ah no, not at all easy in this unnatural Western civilisation, that over-civilisation which closes its eyes to the laws of human nature. The fruit of that tree of which all Eastern girls partake just as soon as their hunger for it begins, is a fruit made evil by the

moral codes of all Christian countries. To Louis this was sinful, it was asking for and getting what is termed a super-sex awareness in women. And what a shame to spoil a woman like Patricia by thwarting human nature! What a cruel thing not to give her young body the same chance that you would give to a rare and lovely plant! Why curb her mental growth and its flowering by starving her physical development? He considered that he was doing a fine work in assisting her development.

"Yes," Patricia said to herself, as she stood lost in thought in her high room in the Casa Nova, "I am going to do it. I am going to meet my pagan Louis. I am going to be the mistress—and I'd better get accustomed to the word and to thinking of myself in that connection—the mistress of the best-looking man I have ever seen. That's what Patricia Paget is going to do. And it isn't a bit a *grande passion*—as it would have been with Francis—oh, how grand that would have been!—It isn't anything but an attempt to get away from boredom and to be with someone who is fond of me." She paused, and then repeated her last words: "*Fond of me.* He *is* fond of me. He's awfully good to me. . . . I'm doing this because I must get some pleasure out of life, enjoy amusing and intelligent companionship, and because . . . well—it's because *you*—" she looked wildly at the vision of her true lover's sunburnt face which had risen before her in the little whitewashed room, regarding her, as she thought, with a deep scorn for all her fine excuses, with its well-known expression of "Don't talk rot! Don't be so youthfully cussed!" and beneath that scorn his crucified love for her agonising his eyes.

"Yes!" she cried passionately to the vision she had called up, "yes, I am going with Louis because you cast me off, sent me adrift, threw me back on my weak and lonely self! I never pretended to be strong. I always told you I was weak!"

She threw the powder-puff with which she had been dabbing at her cheek at her own reflection in the glass. It was meant, of course, for Francis Daubigny. Her feelings had to find relief in action, and this vindictive attack on her lover's interfering vision did her good.

She went to the window and savagely pulled down the blind. It sprang back again, and as it did so she was compelled to look at the view of Jerusalem which filled the whole foreground beyond. All its amazing beauty was before her, but it only served to irritate still more her over-excited nerves.

"Oh!" she apostrophised it, "I am sick of you! I never want to see you again!" She was addressing in particular the Mount of Olives. "Yes, I'm sick to death of all that you

stand for!" She paused, then added with tense bitterness, "Sheer humbug!"

But in spite of its humbug, the mountain still continued to draw Patricia's eyes. They stared angrily and undiscerningly over the twinkling landscape which lay across the narrow valley of the Kedron (the Black Brook). They travelled to the Garden of Gethsemane. Familiar words rang in her ears . . . the world-familiar words of prayer—"Our Father Who art in Heaven." But with her eyes taking in the scene before her, her mind objectively rejected the words it recalled. She scorned their suggestion of prayer, staring out at that night scene with youthfully defiant eyes. Yet—perhaps because of those familiar and once loved words—with a sudden and unexpected swiftness, Patricia wept!

Did she weep, one wonders, because the Patricia that recalled the disciples' words, "Lord, teach us to pray," also remembered that Jesus wept as He walked down that very mountain-side? Did the eyes that had seen the suffering in Francis Daubigny's face in that vision of a few moments back now see Jesus weep, see His tears of human pity for the fair city which lay stretched at His feet, feel His sympathy for frail humanity?

Patricia's objective mind thought that her tears were shed for herself, and that they were well deserved; but who knows? For who can fathom the workings of the human mind or the mystery of godliness?

In any case, her tears softened her sore, hard eyes. With that view before her, her own words to her lover in Capernaum thrust back the words of the Lord's Prayer. . . . How many things they had said that day and how often they hit back at her, came leaping into the limelight, always at unexpected moments. She had often repeated to herself the words: "But an example is such a cold thing. An example doesn't trouble itself about what I care and feel. And that's just what I care most about—myself and my need of being cared for. An example isn't one bit the lover of my soul; and my soul, or my other self, wants a lover, must have a lover's care. An example isn't the refuge I need for my weak loneliness, and I belong to the weak, I'm not one of the strong, independent kind. I truly need what my emotional religion used to make me feel I'd got when I was using the Church as a makeshift. That's why I needn't try to stand alone." . . . And how clearly she remembered his answer! "Yes. I understand. But that's just it. Jesus, with all His seeming simplicity of doctrine, taught man a far, far more difficult creed than that. And the early Church knew it, knew it to be far above man's spiritual development. Jesus preached

a doctrine that needs the most tremendous courage and moral training to follow. It was no food for babes and sucklings, and yet the whole real gist of it all is summed up in the words 'Love ye one another.'"

Yes, Jesus had said these words and they were the very essence of His teachings, and all Patricia Paget wanted was love. Strong human love, the real thing, the love which only Francis could give her.

With another and more effectual tug the blind was pulled down and stayed down. Zion, Mount Scopus, the valley of the brook Kedron, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Mount of Memories were shut out. Her blind shut out the city which made Jesus weep, but it lay there behind the blind. She was always conscious of its presence.

With closed eyes, Patricia stood for some moments motionless. She was alone, utterly alone. Her soul was in the wilderness, and knowing it to be there, the figure of Peter below the Cross in the chapel at Mount Carmel filmed itself before her closed eyes.

What was Peter doing ? Where was he ? Had he taken his new-found soul into the wilderness, there to find his new self ? Was he seeking the solitude which the newly converted always so greatly need—was her old playmate doing that, while she was always trying to get away from the solitude of her own soul, starting on a voyage of discovery and adventure to get away from—well, yes, she supposed it partly was to get away from that uncomfortable "little spark"?

"Oh, damn !" she said. "I will get away from it ! With that amusing Louis I always do get away from it."

She opened her eyes and turned on the electric light.

"Yes, I jolly well will go ! And why not ? Why on earth shouldn't I ?"

Patricia had asked herself these same questions until she ought to have been sick of the very sound of them in her mind.

"He taught His disciples how to pray. He had a genius for lovely phrases, but He never taught a girl as alone as I am how to bear her awful need of human love and sympathy. Louis said the other day that He didn't know any woman like me, surrounded by the dangers of our Western civilisation. That He only knew the women of Galilee and Judea, who lived, of course, quite different kinds of lives. But that was rot—tommy-rot on Louis' part, if He was divine. Absolute and illogical tommy-rot !"

Patricia pulled her travelling trunk out from the wall and got down on her knees beside it. . . . Oh, momentous moment !

This scene of introspection and rebellion was due to the fact that she could no longer put off the definite and final act of packing up her belongings in her trunk, which would not be unpacked until she was in Athens as the mistress of Louis Tricoupi.

Yes, that was what had produced this scene. That was why she had flung, not the ink-pot at the devil, but her powder-puff at the vision of Francis Daubigny. That was undoubtedly why she had so determinedly shut out the Mount of Olives instead of leaving the view exposed, leaving the night beauty of the world to fill up the whole of the window end of her narrow room.

Quietly Patricia took all her undies from the trunk and laid them in orderly little bundles on the floor. She was always extremely methodical and extremely neat. Her stockings of many tones and textures were laid in one pile, her cami-bockers in another, her pyjamas in another, and if you had seen her busy at the job you would never have imagined that there was in her pretty bent head anything more absorbing than the sorting out of stockings and cami-bockers and pyjamas. Her dainty slippers and walking shoes were put securely into their bags—oh, dainty Patricia !

When all this sorting was done and there were no more undies in her trunk, she began looking over the few odds and ends of things that lay at the bottom of it, things she had either brought with her from home or bought in Jerusalem and Palestine generally.

One of these objects was a finely inlaid cedar-wood casket which Patricia lifted out of the trunk slowly, and held in her hands uncertainly, suddenly finding herself trembling all over at the sight of it. She sank back, resting the weight of her body on her heels. She had quite forgotten all about that box and what it contained. . . . No wonder she was behaving like a fool ! . . . It was so greatly a part of her dead past.

Patricia's mother had brought the box back from India as a present for her daughter on her fourteenth birthday. How well Patricia remembered that wonderful day, and her pride in the casket, her love of its Eastern smell !

She opened it slowly. She had not opened it since the day after her first visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In it lay a crucifix attached to a rosary made of carved Eastern seeds. The figure of the crucified Saviour was of ivory, the wooden cross was covered with glossy tortoiseshell. The "pious object" had been given to her by her aunt on the occasion of her confirmation ; it had belonged to a great-aunt of Patricia's who had been a Roman Catholic. Patricia had brought it with her to Palestine, intending to wear it when she visited all the holy sites, but it

had lain unused in the cedar-wood casket in her travelling trunk since that memorable day when so many of her illusions had been destroyed—the day that marked the beginning of this end.

Patricia took out the rosary and placed the empty box on the floor. That belonged to the unfulfilled dream of her childhood—life with her parents in India—that dearest of all dreams which had never materialised. . . . Nothing she wanted ever did materialise! . . . Still holding the rosary and the crucifix attached to it, she rose from her knees and rang the bell.

In a few minutes Nazaraina knocked at her door ; she had been hovering about in its vicinity for some time, for it was the hour at which she generally brought the hot water for Patricia's bath.

"Yes, Sitt. Your hot water is ready," she said. As her eyes caught sight of the neat little piles of clothing on the floor, her heart sank.

So the Sitt was really going ! Her beautiful, generous Sitt ! No more odd bits of money or packets of chocolate or biscuits would find their way into poor Nazaraina's hands !

"Yes, you can bring my hot water," Patricia said, without turning her eyes to the distressed maid-servant ; then as Nazaraina quickly went out and closed the door, she added to herself :

"Poor Nazaraina, she is such a pathetic little object, all eyes and weariness ! "

The woman returned almost at once with the pitcher of hot water. She spread out Patricia's bath-mat, opened her rubber bath and placed it on the mat with the sponges and soap and towels within easy reach.

"Good-night, Sitt," she said softly, and the three words held a note of infinite sadness.

But Patricia stopped her as she was going.

"Just come here, Nazaraina," she said, "I've got a present for you. I am packing, you see, because I'm going away to-morrow. Did you remember that ? "

Nazaraina's eyes had brightened at the word "present." Presents from English ladies were always worth having, and this dear English Sitt was as generous as she was beautiful—though, alas, she was a heretic. Nazaraina sighed at that thought.

"I've got this lovely crucifix for you, Nazaraina," Patricia went on. "Will you keep it in memory of your heretic English Sitt ? Look, it's a very beautiful one, it really is ! "

She caught the shade of disappointment mingled with sorrow which had changed the woman's expectant eyes.

"This has nothing to do with the money I'm going to give you later, my poor Nazaraina," she smiled. "You will get that as well. This is just a precious keepsake for yourself."

Quickly Nazaraina's expression lightened. She had, of course, been counting on the money the Sitt would give her when she went away, and greatly as she would love to possess the crucifix, it could not buy necessities for her querulous mother. But as an extra—a "keepsake" . . . ! She held out her fine, thin hands eagerly. To get this as well was quite another thing, was more than she expected, much more !

"Thank you, thank you, dear Sitt ! Nazaraina will remember her kind Sitt, her beautiful English lady, when she looks at the figure of her adored Saviour Who died for us all. Nazaraina will say her beads on this lovely rosary for the kind Sitt, pray that she may be brought to know the happiness of the true faith. She will ask the Blessed Virgin to intercede for the Sitt so that the Holy Spirit may be bestowed upon her and make her happy."

"But are *you* happy ?" Patricia said eagerly. "You never look happy, poor tired Nazaraina !" She smiled a womanly, tender smile. How could the poor thing look happy ? What a silly question to ask !

Nazaraina was troubled. What could she say ?

"Nazaraina's only happiness in the world is given her by her Church. She would indeed be miserable without its comfort and its teachings. It is the Church which helps her to bear with her mother and to get through all her hard work, each day."

"Good old Nazaraina !" Patricia said earnestly. She liked the truthful answer. It was simple and to the point. The Church was her only happiness, because by its supernatural creeds, its "magic creeds," as Peter had once called them—yes, Peter had used that word !—it gave her a power outside herself, a supernatural aid to help her fight against her miseries. The Church was her form of dope—a blessed dope indeed, poor Nazaraina !

Nazaraina was looking at the crucifix, gazing at it with two-fold emotion—her genuine pride in possessing it, her adoring love for the finely-moulded figure—and she was Eastern enough to have inherited an instinctive appreciation of beauty of form and workmanship—mixed with wonder as to its monetary value. Money meant so much to her ; when it was so hardly earned, how could she help it ? What had the Sitt paid for it ? A great many piastres, she was sure, for it was quite unlike the roughly moulded figures on the crosses which she saw sus-

pended from the cheap rosaries, mementoes of Jerusalem, sold to pilgrims in all the *bric-à-brac* shops in the city.

Patricia watched the woman's changing expressions, then she went over to her dressing-table and picked up her purse. She took out of it all the silver it contained and handed the money to Nazaraina.

"There, Nazaraina," she said, "get something nice for tomorrow's dinner. . . . No, that's not my farewell tip, that is a little extra because you looked after all my things so nicely when I was away. The crucifix can't buy you coffee and eggs and good cheese, whatever else it can do!"

She paused. Nazaraina's eyes were brimming over with tears. "These piastres are from your poor heretic Sitt, Nazaraina, the heretic you have promised always to pray for. But the crucifix and rosary are from a girl who once believed that the Church could do for her what it does for Nazaraina—a girl I knew long, long ago!"

Again she paused, then added bitterly :

"Quite a different sort of girl, dear Nazaraina, from your heretic Sitt . . . but . . . No! I only thought I knew her, for after all she never really existed. Never really!"

She opened the door, and held it wide for the grateful but wholly bewildered and wondering Nazaraina to pass out.

"Now, good-night!" she said. "Yes, go away, or my bath water will be cold, and I love it hot!"

Nazaraina passed out, and while she walked down the picture-lined corridor, Patricia's eyes followed her small work-worn little figure. When it was out of sight she shut the door decisively and said aloud :

"So that's that . . . and now, what sort of bath-salts shall I choose to-night?"

This was a Louis Tricoupi's touch, a reflection of his callous, sensuous attitude towards life, and she was very proud of it.

With fine deliberation she went to the drawer of her table and took from it a flat brown box of Du Barry's compound perfumed bath-salts. She opened the lid quickly and looked at the contents with unseeing eyes, reading the label on each square over and over again without taking in the sense of the printed words. Never before had it taken Patricia so long to choose her bath-salts.

"Poor little Nazaraina! Yes, you will love that rosary. It was right to let you have it . . ."

Suddenly she started at the clear striking of a clock. It was the clock belonging to the chapel of the Hospice, which she had so often heard striking in the silence of her room. So often

that it seemed as if she had heard it during all the years of her life. And truly, so she had, for Patricia had only begun to live consciously since she had slept in that little room.

Quickly she picked up one of the little blocks of salts. On its decorative label was printed in bold gold letters "*Entre Nous.*" Patricia smiled. Not the smile that maddened Francis Daubigny—no—quite another order of smile.

"Well, here's to you, Louis!" she said as she tore the glossy paper from the salts and crushed their fragrance in her hands. "Here's to you, and our next merry meeting!" The salts were popped into the pitcher of hot water to melt in it until Patricia was ready for her bath.

As she shook her fingers free of the crystalline crumbs, she said: "*Entre nous*, Louis, I think I shall smell rather sweet, don't you? And *entre nous*, I feel sure that you too love fragrant bath-salts and delicious creams and adorable scents. I believe you think they are suitable offerings to that lovely Temple which is your own body! As the guardian of that Greek temple, Louis, I think you attend to your duties very conscientiously!"

Patricia put her thickest towel over the open mouth of her hot-water pitcher. She would not be ready to use it for some moments, because she was as fastidious about her room as she was about her pretty person. She always put her room to bed before she went to bed herself; she enjoyed making her Hospice cubicle as attractive as possible. Her big blue glass jar, bought in Bethlehem and filled with wild flowers from Galilee, was placed on the floor behind her bedroom door; the books she had been studying were closed and put in neat piles on her writing-table; then, last of all, the suggestive contents of the travelling trunk were replaced within it. It must be packed early to-morrow, but the things were all in order, the packing would not take long.

When everything was to her liking, Patricia again went to the window. It was her habit to stand there, looking out, before she slipped her scanty modern garments. She adored the purple starlit sky. She loved looking at the city which had been the stage of the world's greatest drama. How often had she stood there dreaming and wondering, and asking questions which the city with all its age and knowledge could not answer. Asking of it things which it could not give her. But to-night she drew back, resisted its indefinable charm.

Yes, she had shut it all out, done with it for ever. She had said that she never wanted to see the Mount of Olives again. Why look at it when, as a practical Hedonist, she was going to find a delicious pleasure in her scented bath?

She smiled. "No matter if it is only a rubber one," she said, "I can imagine it is made of Pentelic marble, and that won't be any harder to believe than"—she stretched out her arms—"oh, just all the impossible things the Drama of Jerusalem asks you to believe!"

CHAPTER XXXVI

AND then there came to pass one of those "cussed" incidents which do, O cynical reader, happen in real life. And it is just because they are an integral part of real life that they find their way into fiction, for the very simple reason that a tragedy, which is a better name for the drama of two people's lives, generally deals with extraordinary incidents and events rather than with the ordinary and everyday occurrences.

The thing that happened to Francis Daubigny just after Patricia left the Casa Nova in Jerusalem to join Louis Tricoupi in Athens forms the main pivot on which hangs the romance, or if you prefer it, the tragedy, of this love-story. And so, if it is like a story-book, it is so because story-tellers turn to real life for their themes, and because it was exactly true to life that it should have happened, as it did happen, too late to prevent the girl taking her rash and headlong rather than Hedonist step. . . .

Now this I know for certain is exactly what did happen.

While Patricia was in Jerusalem, playing about with Louis Tricoupi, Francis Daubigny was travelling from place to place on business connected with the electric power-stations of Palestine, chiefly in the neighbourhood of Beirut and Haifa, trying to concentrate his whole attention on his work, which certainly interested him and took him to interesting places. And while he was thus occupied with business he could just manage to keep thought at bay; it was only when he was idle and trying to enjoy himself—oh, bitter mockery of words!—that it leapt back at him and made him hunger madly for Patricia's presence.

He wanted her in Damascus, that oldest of old cities, where he had nothing urgent to do. He wanted her when he wandered

about the hills of Lebanon and sat under their monumental cedars.

And how Patricia, with her greed for love, would have been comforted had she known the agonies of want her lover suffered at these times. She would have borne her own young loneliness better, might even have resisted the appeal of Louis' beauty and amusing company—or at least have resisted it for a longer period—had she known or imagined that her lover's want of her kept him awake at night just as her need of him kept her awake. Had she known it, how she would have fed on the thought that her own loveliness and all the best and worthiest parts of herself never left him, exhausted him physically by their persistence. Oh, how she would have rejoiced to know all these things, and more. Even the sad fact that his thin Arab face had grown thinner, that his lean body was still leaner, and all because of his hunger for herself, that for the first time in his life Francis Daubigny's finely-strung nerves were beginning to play the dickens with his health.

And this was indeed the case. Sleep no longer came to him with the laying of his head on the pillow. Work was no longer able to drive away the blue devils which the memory of Millicent, his wife, so invariably conjured up. All this annoyed him, made him wish that he had never met the girl who was turning him into a stranger to himself, made him long more than he had ever done before for the peace of a quiet heart. It was damned silly to allow love to make a romantic schoolboy of a world-seasoned man—but there it was, and he hated himself for it!

But Patricia knew nothing of these things, because she knew very little about men. She imagined them to be as strong inwardly as their reserved outward manner suggested. She had no idea, that although they said less than women, their senses inside themselves said a deal more. She visualised Francis Daubigny as being too strong to allow himself to suffer as she suffered, as possessing the male characteristic of concentration on work to the exclusion of love, not only for a time but for ever.

On the day after Patricia's boat left the port of Beirut—a slow boat necessarily, since none of the fast steamers stop at the Piræus—Francis Daubigny arrived in Jerusalem to make his plans for a quick return to England. He had purposely delayed his visit so as to make sure of missing Patricia.

His first step after depositing his light travelling kit at his hotel was to go to the office of Messrs. Thomas Cook & Sons, which has its being in the public square below the shadow of the citadel walls. He did his banking with them, and like many other travellers in Palestine and elsewhere, had his letters from

England addressed to their office, and he now found a big bundle of correspondence awaiting him there. Taking them from the clerk, he went outside and sat himself down to read them on the narrow balcony of the building, raised conveniently above the level of the noisy and busy square by a flight of stone steps.

He untied the string which held the letters together, and ran his eyes over the addresses. Those from his private correspondents he slipped into the right-hand pocket of his coat for more leisurely reading later; the business ones he opened and glanced at with a trained critical concentration. There was nothing among them that demanded an immediate answer—he had scarcely expected that there would be, as he had kept closely in touch with his chiefs, and the local posts had already brought him any local business communications that required his attention; and having satisfied himself on this point, he laid them aside with the unopened circulars and turned his attention once more to the bundle of private letters.

There was one particular envelope which had already attracted his attention. It was from his brother-in-law—his wife's brother—a man for whom he had the strongest regard and affection and who was in every way the opposite of his sister.

No one had shown Francis Daubigny more sympathy and kindness during the whole of his wretched married life than Millicent's brother, the sympathy of fellowship and understanding, for he too had believed in her innocence until the truth of her guilt had forced itself upon him. At first he could not believe that his old playmate was what is termed a "wrong 'un," morally wrong in every sense of the word, for Millicent was naturally crooked, for what reason no one on this earth could explain. These two disillusioned men were excellent friends, yet they seldom wrote to one another; they never thought of corresponding regularly with each other, as women friends would have done under the same circumstances, and so naturally Francis Daubigny now singled out his brother-in-law's letter as the one to be read first. He knew that Jim would not have written without some grave reason for doing so.

He hoped to goodness Millicent had not been publicly disgracing herself. He was in a measure always prepared for anything, for he was sure that the worst had not yet happened. That worst would only happen when she had to face with advancing age her lost good looks, when the beauty of her youth had completely abandoned her. With all Western women of reckless temperament that was, he knew, the most dangerous age. The faintest remnant of their past beauty sometimes served to keep them within bounds. How different it was with the Latin

women, who, however immoral and apparently reckless, can pull themselves together when old age stares them in the face. They do contrive to end their days in the odour of sanctity, and become almost aggressively moral.

Francis Daubigny opened his letter with an anxious frown on his thin, sensitive face, and read the first two lines with an unchanged expression.

My dear Daub.,

Millicent died this morning after an operation for appendicitis.

Millicent's husband read no further.

"Good Christ!" he said, as the hand which held the letter dropped to his side. "Millicent dead! Good God, can it be true?"

Then his mind became a blank, bludgeoned into inactivity by this unexpected news. The anxious frown on his face gave way to an expression of haggard bewilderment, of sheer stupidity, and he sat for some minutes staring vacantly at the glittering scene in front of him, as unaware of himself as he was of the busy square and its connection with Jerusalem. He heard, in a dumb, distant fashion, the terrific noise of the Oriental world around him, the long yells of the hawkers and the voices of excited merchants, but inside of himself nothing was alive, nothing was doing.

The words "*Millicent died this morning*" had, of course, passed into his inner consciousness with something of their real significance, but his objective entity could only regard them vacantly, foolishly. They came to him from without, like the other sounds and sights about him, clanging on his brain like some loud chiming bell, dancing before his vision like some wildly-flashing sky-sign too quickly gone to be taken in. They were a part of the noisy world without, they were not a part of himself.

Francis Daubigny sat there on the little balcony until his knocked-out consciousness came gradually back to him. He was still reeling under the shock which had sent the walls of Jerusalem tumbling down, crashing about his head. Just as the vibration of the Biblical trumpets threw down the walls of Jericho, so the words "*Millicent died this morning*" with the thunder of their vibration had brought down the walls of Jerusalem. His eyes had watched the Tower of David swaying up in the blue before it came crashing down. But his power

of thought was slowly reasserting itself, his brain was groping and trying to get back to work again.

Instead of saying, "Millicent died this morning," it now said, "How can Millicent be dead?" And working still more clearly, "How can anything so frightfully alive as Millicent be dead? How can she be nothing? How could she be not living, when she never could die?"

He spoke aloud, with still more consciousness of himself and of his working brain. "Millicent can't possibly be dead, when her livingness, her awful aliveness was the most alive thing in the whole world. The alive Millicent, the most cruel thing in my life!"

No! Millicent was not the sort of person to die. He saw her too much alive for that! Death could have nothing to do with her vulgarly blatant aliveness. How could he believe it because he had seen those words written on a piece of paper? They couldn't make a negation of all that had been so objectively positive! Never, oh, never!

His submerged consciousness struggled floundering in this sea of thoughts. He was certainly coming to the surface, beginning in a confused sort of way to make for the shore of facts, to take in the statement which as yet he could not believe.

Millicent dead! Millicent, whose superabundant livingness had so often made him wish that he himself was dead. . . . He simply could not believe it. How could any being so wicked as Millicent be allowed to die so suddenly—be given no time—be cut off short in the middle of all her carnal desires? . . . Millicent made nothing that mattered! That physically luxurious woman now a still corpse on a narrow hospital bed! . . . Francis Daubigny shivered. No—by now she would be something worse than that, if he was to believe her dead! The letter must have taken more than a week to reach Jerusalem, and it had been lying in Cook's office for some days.

"Oh," he said, "how she would hate death! How she always hated even talking about it. Dreaded it, resented its ruthless interference with her enjoyment!" He recalled how when death took off a friend or a relation she would be furious with them for daring to die. How selfish of them, she would say, to interrupt with their funerals and their silly mourning her daily round of gaiety! . . . And that woman, he was now to believe, was dead herself. It was incredible—and yet her brother had written to say so.

He made himself read the rest of his brother-in-law's letter. He was more like himself now, conscious of himself and of the world around him. The Tower of David was once more standing

up against the deep blue of the sky, the sunlit walls of Jerusalem and of the citadel were in their places again above the surging multi-coloured crowd, which was moving like a kaleidoscope before his unseeing eyes—that strange crowd of Oriental peoples all made beautiful and biblical by that light that never was on land or sea, that light which lightens Jerusalem and paves its streets with gold.

Like a man recovering from an illness, Francis Daubigny was regaining his balance of reason. Quickly his mind was veering back to the condition it was in before he opened that fateful letter, so brief and bald and to the point—that letter which contained no conventional expressions of sympathy, which never even hinted at the immense relief they would both most naturally feel.

Millicent, it told him, had died suddenly in a nursing home from heart-failure following an operation for appendicitis. If Francis could see his way to coming back to London it would help to simplify matters and save a great deal of expensive correspondence with his lawyers.

After reading the letter through for the third time, he put it in his pocket and picked up the rest of his correspondence. Of course he must go back to London, he told himself, even while his mind was still groping and striving to get at the reason why this was so. Still it was from without that that same voice was saying to him: "Millicent is dead! Millicent is dead! Millicent died this morning"—still that outside voice did not help him to grasp the truth of the words, did not help him to believe them. The fact of Millicent's death, of his own consequent freedom, had not yet got hold of him. His bewildered brain had not as yet connected the two things. It was still too occupied with the staggering awfulness, the ghastliness of the fact that a woman like Millicent could die. A dead Millicent in place of a grossly alive one was all that his senses could hope at present to deal with. And surely the stark fact of her death as apart from anything else was sufficient, with its hideous indifference to her spiritual unpreparedness.

• • • •

But quite suddenly, when his heart was beating more normally again, and his mind was steadier, the crouching, waiting thing which had been decently biding its time leapt out into the open and fastened upon him. His own freedom seized the whole of his consciousness and dealt with him as it pleased—was all of him.

Millicent was dead, but Patricia was living ! Millicent, his wife, was dead, and because of her death he could have the living Patricia, his beloved woman. There was nothing now to keep them apart. Millicent's death and his own freedom were one and the same thing. Her death meant that he was reborn. Because Millicent was just nothing now, made nothing by death, he might at last live and be something !

All his numbed bewilderment had now given place to a wild exuberance of thought, so wild and so unrestrained that it almost burst his tired head. And oh, how it was dragging forth the carnal man in him, how surely it was wiping out his subconscious pity for the wretched Millicent which had been the greater part of his former numbness. . . . O God ! there had been pity ! Human pity, human suffering for her unclean soul ! . . . But he was human, and he was free, and the air was now vibrant with that one thought—his freedom !

If only he had been free when he parted from Patricia on that never-to-be forgotten night on Mount Carmel ! . . . And he *had* been free—only as yet he did not realise that crucial fact, could not at the moment deal mentally with dates. Even with a more settled mind, with his nerves better under control, he still kept returning to the unbelievableness of Millicent's death. Again and again he said : "It isn't true. She just can't be dead !" . . . And then for the fourth time he read his brother-in-law's letter, for the fourth time he saw the words "*Millicent died this morning*" written in that familiar handwriting. . . .

He shivered, and hated himself for the exuberance of the thoughts that swept over him and caught him up to the seventh heaven. How ghastly it was of him, how inhuman, to be looking eagerly to see if it was really true, that Jim had really told him that Millicent was dead, or if he had just imagined it. How awful to think that he was eager for its truth so that he might marry Patricia ! Yes, it was awful and despicable, and yet he could not drag back from the past the faintest feeling of sentiment for the dead woman. He could not see her now as he had seen her when they first met years ago. Death was not doing the correct thing with him, it was not softening his feelings towards her, not really, although it was making him sorry for what might now be happening to her soul. Death is supposed to wipe out all bitterness, to do all sorts of fine things to the living who suffered through wickedness of the dead while they were alive, but Millicent's death was not making him anything that he had not been before with regard to her.

But how could the reading of those four words, "*Millicent died this morning*," make him picture her as dead ? How could

they make him forget her coarse soul and her pitiless sacrilege of all that love should hold sacred? How could death really change her in his eyes? How could the words which told him of it do anything but produce in him a bewildering and unstable sense of relief?

And so, why pretend? Why be sentimental about the death of the woman who had destroyed his happiness? They had been nothing to each other in life for many years. Or, rather, enemies more than neutrals, perhaps, for Millicent had persisted in believing that Francis had turned her brother against her, and since this affected her financially, she had hated Francis accordingly.

Daubigny rose from his seat, urged by his unacknowledged determination to discover without loss of time if Patricia was still in Jerusalem. He was both thinking and feeling now at a whirlwind pace, rushed into action by conflicting doubts and fears.

As he walked down the steps into the square he still felt physically shaken; the sun was blinding him. His hawk-like eyes, which Patricia always swore could, like an eagle's, look into the blazing Eye of Heaven, were as little able to bear its light at the moment as her own soft grey ones. He could scarcely see where he was going, but seemed to himself to be stumbling across the square like a drunken man. In reality he was walking with his usual lithe uprightness, feeling his way with his feet rather than seeing it with his eyes. The sudden snapping of that tie which for so long had kept him rigidly in hand, had kept his mind from groping after forbidden fruit, was too abrupt. That quick release, that end to all that had made impossible the thoughts which were now intoxicating his senses with their possibilities, had come too suddenly.

Automatically he turned out of the mid-day glitter and noise of the wide thoroughfare into the shadow and stillness of a narrow passage, a change so instantaneous and complete as to be unimaginable to those who do not know the East. The quietness and the darkness of that little lane after the glare and bustle of the square was typical of that land of contrasts. The passage led him pretty directly to Patricia's Casa Nova. His subconscious carnal being had found its way, its very direct way to her home. The mating instinct had made him eager to give his new-found liberty of soul—the liberty of his objective being was scarcely yet accomplished—into the hands of a girl about whom he really knew pathetically little. Such, however, is human nature. His liberty was acting like new wine in his veins. Was he really such an ass, you will say, as to want so

soon to relinquish it? Was it going to be a case of "Out of the frying-pan into the fire"?

Francis Daubigny thought that it was going to be for him what Patricia had said it would be for her, this mating of theirs—"Heaven without dying." And so the fine male in him, as apart from all else, was bent on finding its desired mate. He had known his freedom for scarcely one hour, and yet here he was, that world-seasoned man, that man who had suffered so cruelly under the pressure of the matrimonial yoke, hurrying on his way to see if he could again do team work, again run in harness with a mate, bend his neck once more under the conjugal tie.

He was walking now up the narrow high-walled passage that lay directly below Patricia's window. He knew her window, and as he passed it he raised his head and stared up. Would she be there, looking out? . . . Oh, if only he had called for his letters on the evening of their return to Jerusalem from Mount Carmel! But Cook's office, of course, was shut then. Getting his letters would have meant staying in Jerusalem until the next morning, and with Patricia in Jerusalem he had known that to stay would have meant putting too great a strain on his strength of will. It had only been by leaving the city that same night that he had been able to carry out his determination not to see her again.

His eyes dropped. Patricia was not at her window. But if her darling self who wanted himself so badly was in that narrow room! . . . And to think that after all he need never have left her! Had he been stupidly quixotic? Had he been, as Patricia said he was, just a pig-headed Britisher? Had he made a stupid fuss about the indissolubility of marriage? . . . He hurried on, his senses comforting him with the assurance that anyway that was now ancient history, that Millicent was dead and he was free! He had waited so long for any sort of happiness that he could surely wait a little longer for Heaven on Earth.

He was at the door of the Hospice. He rang the bell. Like a lovesick schoolboy, his heart seemed to stand still while the harsh sound clattered through the passages of the high building, till presently a porter of mixed nationality leisurely answered its summons.

"Is Miss Paget still staying in the Hospice?" Francis Daubigny asked with as much dignity as he could summon up. He waited. Why on earth couldn't the dago answer his simple query?

But that was not to be expected. The man drifted back to

his seat behind a big desk, and slowly began turning over the back pages of a ledger. After going over the names on quite a number of out-of-date pages, he turned again to the page at which the book had been open in the first instance, looking at it for a few moments before saying, with gruff indifference: "Naa, sirr. Mees Paget is not here. She left the Hospice yesterday morning"—a fact which he had known quite well all the time.

"Can you tell me where she has gone?" Francis pursued. "I have important news for her."

"Yes, sirr. Mees Paget she went to Beirut. Her steamer sail to-day at one o'clock."

The porter's surly manner—he was, as Patricia had said, the only disagreeable thing in the Hospice—annoyed Francis Daubigny, who was all nerves at the moment. He had not *expected* to find Patricia in Jerusalem, but he had *hoped*—and with the dashing of that hope he said a little impatiently: "Well, can you tell me where she was going to by the steamer?"

The man shrugged his shoulders. "Naa. I don't know. I think to Eng-land."

"By what boat, can you tell me?" persisted Francis.

"Naa, sirr."

As he spoke, the man saw Francis Daubigny's hand go into his trouser pocket, and his sharp ears caught the sound of money jingling. This tip, he must increase it. He corrected his flat denial of knowledge.

"Just wait a bit, sirr. . . . I think perhaps I know. Listen—you go to the Lloyd Triestino shipping office—you know very well Lloyd Triestino, very near to Tomasso Cook's—well, you ask there, they will tell you, hein? Mees Paget she go by their boat—yes, I know ver' well, for I see all her baggage have got Lloyd Triestino labels on them."

With the handsome tip which Francis Daubigny had given him in his hand the man became more loquacious. "May-be, sirr, if you send a telegram, hein? The young lady may-be will get it all right . . . May-be, yes!" He shrugged his shoulders. "Her steamer it call at many places—Antioch—Cyprus—I don't know—Athens may-be. I don't know—"

But Francis Daubigny was off. He looked at his watch. Would the Italian shipping office still be open? "May-be," but he doubted it. As he hurried through the streets, what a tumult his mind was in, what a jumble of emotions swayed him.

Sure enough, the office was shut! Damn! He must wait until the morning. Well, he knew Patricia's address in London. She would get a letter from him on her arrival there, because letters would go by a fast steamer and she was going by a slow

one. He would, of course, go to the office in the morning and see if it would be possible to send her a telegram, but he knew the ways of telegrams in the East. He knew that when the administration of the post-office and the telegraph-office and the railway lines is not under the always unobtrusive but exceedingly effectual management of Western officials they work in their own Oriental leisurely way. Haste is of the devil—and the Britisher. He also understood the methods of these small trading steamers too well to hope that a telegram to Patricia, even when at long last sent over the wires, would find its way into her hands. For one thing the spelling of her name would become in transit too cryptic, too unlike itself, for even the most intelligent Italian official on board the steamer to recognise it for what it was.

When Francis Daubigny arrived at the office of the Lloyd Triestino Shipping Company not many minutes after the official hour of opening, fortune smiled on him, for he not only discovered that he could send a telegram to meet the arrival of Patricia's steamer at the Piræus, and that there was every likelihood of her receiving it, but he also found that he could get a berth in one of the Company's fastest steamers due to sail from Alexandria the next afternoon. This, of course, necessitated his leaving Jerusalem in a few hours, but that he could easily do, and by that fast steamer he would arrive at Trieste, the port for which Patricia had booked her passage, two days before she would. He could meet her on her arrival, he would be standing on the wharf to greet her! He already saw her looking out for him, eagerly searching the crowd of faces on shore in the faint hope that he might be there after all! He could see her radiant smile and her childish expression of relief and happiness.

Not for one moment did he face the possibility that Patricia might not be on that boat. Why should he? The Lloyd Triestino passenger list showed her intention of going to Trieste, and he knew nothing of her real intention of going only as far as the Piræus. She had covered her traces well enough, and there was nothing to show her secret plans. And Francis had never understood how bitterly he had wounded her love for him, how incapable she was of realising that it was his absurd scruples, as she called them, that had endeared his personality to her—just as Louis' lack of scruples made her incapable of taking any part of him seriously, quite incapable of loving him. He did not make sufficient allowance for what his awakening of

her passion might do for her nature, how ungrudging and whole-souled was her love for him, how dangerous was the reaction of her aloneness at this particular crisis in her evolution, when the refuge of the Church had by a natural process of events been taken away from her. And it must also be remembered that he did not know that Louis Tricoupis had so suddenly and unexpectedly appeared to fill the gap.

Patricia's difficult years were far more difficult than Francis Daubigny imagined—those youthfully eagerly expectant years, those full living years when everything matters so terribly. Oh, their frightfulness when nothing happens! Youth's blank dismay when life gives no response to its indefinable wants. With some sluggish temperaments Youth never has these years. Such people are young without being young, their passions are unworthy of the name. They may be spared the wages of sin, the aftermath of sins of commission, but would that salvation ever make up for the ghastly omission of the ecstasy of youth? No, the sins of commission have a better flavour, opportunities lost itch and irritate, if the slaggard has blood enough to suffer in this way. Patricia's youth made her world full of danger. But, for her at least, better a world bursting with danger than one of torpid safety and icy caution—the virtue of the undesired.

And so, wholly in ignorance of Patricia's danger, never dreaming of the momentous step she had taken, Francis Daubigny booked his passage and hurried off by the night train to Alexandria.

And the curious thing was that already it seemed to be some time since he had heard of Millicent's death. Probably this was due to the fact that each hour that passed seemed like a day, so quickly was he living, so great was the transformation of his mental outlook, so eager was he to reach Trieste.

Now and then, of course, the knowledge of his new liberty bewildered him still, seemed unbelievable. But that feeling subsided. It lost itself in the urgency of his preparations and of his thoughts of Patricia.

Dear youthful, and in many ways very ignorant, Patricia had taught him the most wonderful thing in the world. She had taught him that a man's love for a woman, unsought, even undesired, can descend upon him as unaccountably as the gift of the Holy Spirit. In Galilee his love for forbidden Patricia had come to him in just such a way as the love of Jesus had come to Peter. It made him understand Divine Love better, because now the whole world and its beauty was Patricia. The dazzling sunshine in Alexandria was Patricia, the beauty of the wide bay

and its blue water. And above all, England, home and beauty was Patricia.

He supposed that that was how Peter was now feeling about Divine Love. It must be, or he could never have given up Patricia. Yes, to Peter the whole world and its beauty meant Divine Love. For himself the whole world and its beauty meant the girl whom he had left to the tender mercies of "the Adonis of the *Helouan*," as she had called him, because he, her Anglo-Arab lover, had, in a curious way, become aware that her taunting eyes and her maddening mouth made it wiser for him to run away.

CHAPTER XXXVII

PATRICIA had slept. Providence, with the aid of ten grains of aspirin, had been kind, else she had been but a sorry bride who went forth to meet her bridegroom. The voyage had been calm, and she had managed to pass the lovely days somehow, just because they were so lovely, so gaily pagan in spirit ; but the nights had been hell.

It was the yells of the Greek boatmen and the lowering of the gangway that woke her, making her jump up and kneel on her berth to look out of the porthole. . . .

Yes, they had arrived at the Piræus ; the steamer was now lying at anchor some distance off the shore, surrounded by every sort and condition of picturesque southern craft, a Gulliver among the Lilliputians. Already the sun was high and glorious everywhere, except in her small cabin, which it had not yet discovered. It might have been a mid-day in August—an English August, she thought—except that the wide-open, unclouded light could never be English.

Patricia stretched herself and flung wide her arms. "Oh, how I love it ! " She thrust her dark head still further out of the porthole. Her senses leapt as her eyes fell on the gay mass of colour. Even if it was mostly dirty colour, what did it matter ? —the sunshine made it exquisite.

How glorious to be going ashore, to be in it all, to be a bit of the noise and the glare and the passion of the South ! Even the angry voices of the traders thrilled her. She loved their demoniacal rage when a fellow trader outdid them in their art ; loved, loved, loved their flashing eyes, their bare brown limbs, their energy and gesticulation, because it was all so expressive of a tense, fierce livingness.

From the deck of the steamer the night before she had seen the outline of the Parthenon quite distinctly. It had come as a surprise, up against the sky-line. She had not expected to see it from the Piræus, only from Athens itself, and now she reverently knelt at her open porthole, gazing at the marvel. Was she actually going to live on friendly terms with that greatest of all temples, with the most perfect building ever designed by man ? Was she, Patricia Paget, going that very morning to climb to its height and sit with Louis, surrounded by its beauty ? She drew a deep breath. Was Athens going to be her home ? Was her perfectly new life, and probably her new outlook upon love and men, going to begin in Athens ?

She gazed again with delighted senses at the Southern world around her. It was so entrancing ! Life was going to be ripping ! . . . She tried to push back the thought that had thrust itself forward, that thought that lay behind all the surface glitter and charm. No, no ! It just wasn't going to be allowed to dim the brightness of her pleasure—and what a glorious pleasure it would be to see all that she was going to see, to wander about with pagan Louis—drawn close to the soul of ancient Greece ! How heavenly to sit up in the Parthenon and look down at busy modern Athens while he fed her mind on its past glory ! She wouldn't long be as ignorant as she was now ! She would develop into something a little more interesting. Louis had made her feel that, made her realise that with him her mind would get a chance of developing.

She slipped from her berth and began her toilet, that skimpy up-to-date toilet of the modern hygienic girl. Wholly modern she looked, too, very boyish in her orange pyjamas, very slim and athletic ; but it was by no means a psychologically modern girl who was putting on those up-to-date garments, finding it each second more impossible to banish that old-fashioned thought —banish the full meaning of the new life in Athens.

To be perfectly honest, in spite of its morning clearness, Patricia had not really seen the bright scene outside her porthole half so vividly as she had seen the significance of that thought. Nothing like so vividly as she visualised Louis Tri-coupis waiting for her in Cook's Travel Bureau in Athens !

His beauty, his expectant smile, his . . . well, everything about him ! He was not meeting her at the Piræus, on account of the very early arrival of the ship and the uncertainty as to the hour at which she would be able to get ashore. Board of Health officers and passport officials do not trouble themselves about lovers' meetings. And so they had arranged that Louis should telephone from his club to Cook's for the necessary data, and then come along there to meet her at an hour that would be convenient to them both.

While Patricia dressed herself, not even the cries of the white-bloused boatmen in their little craft, fitted out like miniature shops, not even the shouts of the busy deck hands unloading cargo over her head, succeeded in drowning the voice of that out-of-date thought, her own still, small voice of conscience. How endlessly it kept harping on just the same string that had vibrated so persistently for the last three days whenever she was not chattering rubbish to someone among her fellow passengers. " You are going to cut the painter ! " it said. " You are going to cut yourself off from your own world, from the world of virtuous girls. You are going to be a man's mistress—that ugly sounding word which comes so glibly to malicious tongues will be your title—even if it is a secret, even if it is only in your own mind that this humiliating knowledge lies, the knowledge of your right to it. Your accustomed world may not know it, yet whenever you hear them talk of ' girls going wrong ' you will blush to think that you are one of that pathetic company. Worse than many of them—for it is not with the ecstasy of a *grande passion* that you have slipped from the path of virtue; love has not made it seem worth while—love that makes everything worth while. No, with you it has been the calculated search for pleasure. You are bartering your birthright of purity for a veritable mess of pottage, a Hedonist pagan adventure. In your own soul you are making yourself an outcast for this ! "

This repeated accusation was really damnable. It drove her frantic. Why could she not control her mind and silence it ? Why was that abominable other self of hers so determined to spoil her pleasure, so bent on having the last word ? Oh, that beastly " little spark " ! Hadn't she managed to crush it after all ?

But she could not really stop to argue now. She must hurry up and get dressed. The health officer might come on board at any moment. She must be ready to see him, for without his pass she would not be able to go ashore at all. She smiled at the idea, a watery little smile with no passion-provoking madness in it. Supposing she did miss the examination, was too late

to get her permit to land—how scornful Louis would be ! Yes, just scornful, for had he ever quite believed that she would meet him ? Hadn't his eyes expressed their doubt that last night on the roof of the *Casa Nova*, when he begged her to "play the game ?" . . . Well, he would see that she had more nerve than he gave her credit for ! In less than two hours she would be with him. The remembrance of his beauty and careless gaiety strengthened her. Her lovely Apollo !

She had done all her packing the previous night, except for those necessary odds and ends that can never be put in until the last moment. She had paid the bill for all her extras ; there was nothing now to be done except to tip the servants.

A knock at the door made her jump. Her nerves were all on edge, and her heart behaved foolishly, uncomfortably, changing its even beat for a violent thumping. Who could it be ? Had Louis come after all to the *Piræus* ? Had he ? A sick feeling came over her. She wasn't ready—not yet prepared for their meeting. For almost two hours she was still her own—for those hours she could still call herself "a good woman" . . . but could she ? Could she really and truthfully ? What was a good woman ? The sick feeling was going, giving place to a cynical merriment.

"Who's there ?" she called.

"*Praego, signorina !*" The door opened and the bedroom steward appeared. "Will you please very soon come on deck and show your passport, and see the Board of Health officer ? They are both on board and all the passengers must assemble in the smoking-room. Mai," the man shrugged his shoulders, "not if you do not wish to go ashore."

Patricia's heart, which had quieted down, now resumed its unruly beating. Showing her passport meant the first definite step to that new life in Athens !

"Yes, I will come," she said nervously.

Oh, what a fool she was ! Just the old-fashioned slave-woman who hadn't the courage to take her liberty in both hands and use it ! She called the steward back.

"Can I leave all these things like that ?" She pointed to the open suit-case and her dressing-case.

"*Si, si, signorina*, they will be perfectly safe. No one is going to occupy your cabin ; it has not been taken for the remainder of the voyage."

"Oh, good !" At the man's words an unconscious sigh of relief came from Patricia. It was pleasant to think that her belongings could stay in her cabin until she was ready to go ashore, that no stranger would be poking his or her nose into

the little room which had been her home, which must still hold something of her troubled self. It must !

She went upstairs, joining a queue of shore going passengers making their way towards the smoking-room. Many of them she had spoken to, and some of them she had found amusing and helpful ; they had passed the time for her, been pleasant company, a bulwark against her troubled thoughts.

Amongst them there was one man whom she had particularly liked, an American missionary attached to the great educational mission work in Beirut, founded by Dr. Bliss, which has done such wonderful work in Syria. He was spending his leave following the footsteps of St. Paul, and it was with this kindly and humorous little soul that pagan Patricia had spent one long and happy day in Antioch, a day of half confidences on her part as to meeting her lover in Athens. He had supposed from that that she was going there to be married, and she had not enlightened him further. It was, after all, her own business, not his, what she did when she had met her lover !

Now, as they went up the stair to see the passport official, Patricia nodded to him, smiling at the thought of what he was thinking of her—beautiful things, she knew, beautiful, but alas, untrue ! It was not from self-interested motives of conceit that Patricia had kept back from him the truth about herself, but simply because she could not bear to disillusion the poor man. His charming belief in herself, his way of treating her as though she were a spring flower instead of an intending sinner, made the telling impossible. Why hurt the little man ? He need never know. Why spoil his ideals ?

Patricia waited a whole half-hour before it was her turn to show her passport ; then, however, being marked "British Born" it was no more than casually glanced at. Again she said to herself as she had said on similar occasions on her journey in Asia Minor : " Albion may be perfidious, but the women and the men of Albion are still all right—they are ' British Born ' ! " As she watched the travellers who were obviously not " British Born " standing waiting and waiting while their papers were being examined, she had often thought how much they must wish that they could have those magic words inscribed on their passports.

After her passport had been given back to her, and the examining officer had looked quickly from the photograph pasted on to it to the girl in front of him, obviously with the thought of what a libel on a pretty woman the picture was, and the same formalities had been gone through with the health officer, Patricia hurried down again to her cabin to finish her packing. She was

just about through with it, locking her dressing-case, in fact, when again a knock came at her door. She opened it quickly, and to her surprise found herself face to face with the American missionary, staring into his eyes. Her surprise was obvious. She waited for him to speak, but he was foolishly shy.

"I came to ask you," he said, almost pleadingly, "if you will allow me to take you ashore and see you safely to Athens."

Patricia started and tried to speak, but at the first sign of her lively protest he said :

"Now please do ! I don't like the idea of your going alone, it won't be pleasant for you. And I am not returning to the ship. I shall have a whole week in Athens. My time is my own, you know. I told you so."

Patricia's pale face with its deeply shadowed eyes became pink with confusion. She blushed from her slender throat to her white forehead. Oh, always enchanting Patricia !

"No, no !" she said, "don't bother about me. You are much too kind. I shall be perfectly all right."

"But it won't be any bother," he said, "it will be a pleasure !" He smiled, as though to say : "You know it ! . . . Just another little journey before we part. The drive to Athens, remember, is five miles."

Patricia wavered. His company would be welcome. It would make her less nervous about the meeting ! She smiled, but shook her head. Could she ? Should she ? He was such a dear !

"You have made my voyage so happy," he said. "I have seen sadly little of youth and girlhood—lately nothing at all, in fact." He meant, of course, nothing at all of girls like Patricia, with clean Western laughter, nothing of girls such as he took her to be. "It is good for us missionaries in the East to meet and mix with girls like you, refined gentlewomen of our Western civilisation. So please grant me this pleasure, and I promise you I will leave you at your appointed meeting place," he smiled ; "leave you in good time."

Patricia laughed.

"I have ordered a boat to be ready for me at eight o'clock." Her eyes told him that she had consented. "What time is it now ?" She said the last words with mock resignation.

"Oh, that's splendid," he said, answering her implied consent to his plea. "It's just half-past seven—time for breakfast. I will be at the gangway at eight o'clock."

He turned to leave her, obviously anxious to give her no time to change her mind.

"Oh, thank you, thank you !" Patricia called after him.

"It's just too nice of you. I don't believe you were going ashore anything like so early!"

"What does that matter?" he called back to her, "if by going a couple of hours earlier I enjoy myself ever so much more?" He stepped back. "I would like to tell you—" he hesitated—"your betrothed what a lucky young man he is. . . . Oh no, I won't," he added, laughing as he noted her rising colour, her look of embarrassment. "I promise to leave you in good time!"

With a pleased smile he left her. Patricia very deliberately closed the door.

"That's a dear, dear little soul, far too good for this beastly world," she murmured. "Far, far too good for me! No, I won't hurt him—I won't tell him—even though I loathe deceiving him. Deceiving good people is the most hateful part of doing wrong! No, I won't let him guess, even if I meet him in Athens when I'm Louis' mistress!" She said the last words bitterly, as her forefinger pressed the electric bell.

"My breakfast, please," she said to the steward who answered it, "and as quickly as you can!" As the man withdrew, she went on with her thoughts.

"Of course I am a creature of his own invention, and he hasn't seen any Western girls for ages, poor little soul! He looks into my eyes as if he were looking at the face of the Virgin Mary, as if I couldn't know about anything that wasn't pure and beautiful! In this funny old world he's a lost soul!"

Her musing was again interrupted by the appearance of her breakfast tray, and very soon her attention was centred on the excellent coffee and hot rolls. But somehow they were difficult to swallow, the effort to eat almost choked her, although she made a valiant effort. Her day was beginning early, and goodness alone knew when and where she would get any lunch. Goodness knew, but wouldn't tell!

The finishing of each action and the beginning of the next meant that she was drawing nearer and nearer to her meeting with Louis. Now that her breakfast was over she must see that her luggage was taken upstairs. She rang again for the steward who was always at her beck and call. He was a Latin to whom beauty, riches, and youth make their appeal—a charming combination, truly!

When he had taken her luggage and thanked her whole-heartedly for her tip, Patricia looked at her watch; it was two minutes to eight. She left the cabin abruptly, and ran up the stairs and hurried along to the gangway. The little missionary was waiting—his luggage had already been put in the boat. "He's a pet lamb!" she thought, "but oh, if he only knew!"

As his eyes met hers and welcomed her, they took in at a glance her more than usual pallor and her almost painfully tense expression, the reason for which, of course, he quite misunderstood. Patricia spoke with a forced gaiety, made herself smile. How absurdly unlike a girl going to meet her lover she must seem to him, if she looked as she felt, a quivering mass of nerves.

She glanced down at the small boat and its picturesque crew waiting for her at the foot of the gangway.

"Do please go first," she cried to the American, "and allow me to fall on you if I turn giddy!" . . . Oh, what a beastly swinging set of steps! However was she going to get down them, feeling as she did?

"Oh, they're quite all right!" he assured her, following her gaze. "Perfectly safe. You didn't mind them at Antioch. If you do slip, one of these brawny villains will catch you. You won't go into the water!"

"I don't know about that!" she demurred. "Supposing I fall backwards?" She was trying to be flippant. "But please do go in front and let me send you headlong first, anyway! What more can I ask of you in the way of chivalry?"

She laughed faintly. Through her light words and her lighter laughter the little voice was nagging at her again . . . *You are leaving the ship—you are cutting the painter! This is our last link with your old assured, conventional life!* . . .

The missionary had taken two steps down the gangway, and now Patricia must follow him. "Are you sure that all my things are on board?" she said. The pretext was absurd, useless, for the bedroom steward who had carried them on deck had told her that he had personally put everything into the boat, an attention her tip had certainly merited. "Si, si, signorina," he had said, "tutti, tutti—all, all!" So, as the missionary started again to go down the steps, there was nothing for Patricia to do but to follow him.

She was indeed "cutting the painter," setting herself adrift on the tide of her Hedonist adventure. Oh, when the first plunge was over, how heavenly it would be! . . . Yes, going down those swaying steps and rowing ashore in that gay Greek boat meant taking the plunge! She went cautiously on, holding grimly to the rope balustrade, while all the time the rowing-boat with its white-bloused, scarlet-capped oarsmen was bobbing up and down and swaying about, leaving the steps and sucking back to them, until she was becoming horribly giddy. Was there no decent landing-stage in the whole of Asia Minor or Greece? It was ghastly!

When she had got within three steps of the bottom of the gangway, almost on a level with the boat, Patricia stopped and turned round. Something—she did not know and never would know what—turned her round, made her begin quickly and firmly remounting the swaying steps before she was objectively aware of what she was doing. Something wholly outside herself was sending her up the gangway far more decisively than she had come down it. Some urgent force gave her a new physical strength. Her tiredness had vanished. This was indeed a wholly different Patricia from the one who had felt giddy the moment before.

The boatmen called out to the missionary, who was by this time at the bottom step, to help her into the boat. His back was towards her, but he turned round quickly at the shout, and looked up. What on earth was the girl doing? Her hurriedly determined retreat astonished him. He supposed that she must have discovered something to have been left behind.

"Oh," he exclaimed, "why didn't you let me fetch it, whatever it is! What have you forgotten?"

He hurried up the steps after her, but Patricia, without looking back, called out: "I haven't forgotten anything. Don't come up, please don't!"

No, she must not look back. She must not see the glittering water, the sun-bathed shore. And oh, never, never again must she see those heaven-adorning columns of the supreme Pheidias—no, never again!

"Go back," she said. "Go ashore without me. I'm not coming." She shook her head decidedly and went on climbing.

"Not coming? Not going ashore? But . . ." The little man was lost in bewilderment. "Your luggage is all in the boat."

"I know it is," Patricia said. Oh, what did luggage or anything else matter at such a moment? "Please send it back when you get ashore. It will be all right. It doesn't matter."

They were on the deck of the ship now, he was close beside her.

"Oh, please don't wait!" she said urgently. "I just *can't* come. I'm not coming."

"Are you ill?" he asked. "Can I take a message? Your friend will be anxious. Let me help you!"

A crooked smile twisted Patricia's soft lips, hardened her appealing expression, made her older, a little less lovely.

"Oh, he will understand. He will be all right."

Had he really, she wondered again, ever expected her to play the game?

"Just you go ashore without me," she repeated. Then

she held out her hands and said simply: "Good-bye—and thank you, thank you!"

"Oh—but," he said, "this is too sudden. With all your plans made, surely . . ."

"Never mind my plans," Patricia returned hotly. She looked straight into his childishly frank eyes. "I am going to do what you would have me do, if you knew anything about it. And I think perhaps it is because you are so good and have been so kind that I can't go ashore. I meant to, I never thought of *not* going—but now I know I *can't*. Will you please leave me now, and remember . . ." She was going to have said "that it is your being so good that has stopped me being bad!" But what was good or bad? What was her goodness worth, anyhow?

The boatmen were yelling impatiently. They had been pushed out of their place near the gangway by a small steam tug which was bringing a post-office official—not exactly the figure of a Western government official, but still an accredited messenger bearing a telegram. The man mounted the steps and hurried off to the purser's office, and that being closed, he handed the telegram over to one of the deck hands and ran down the steps again with the agility of a goat, and sprang into the tug. As the latter forthwith moved away, the waiting shore-boat resumed its position at the foot of the steps, and the men began their yelling again to the English Mees.

"Oh, do please go back to the boat!" Patricia exclaimed agitatedly. "Those men won't wait for you."

"Oh, won't they!" said the missionary, laughing. "I know them. They will wait all day if they smell a good fare. But I don't want to go on shore now. Let me stay with you, wait until you feel inclined to go."

Patricia held the door of the saloon open in her hand. She faced the American resolutely.

"I am going straight back to England," she said quietly. "I am going to be a good little girl. . . . I was going to meet my lover at Athens. . . . Now will you go? Now do you understand? Do you still want me to go ashore?"

The childlike eyes shone tenderly. "Dear God help you, if I do understand!" he said softly.

"Try to understand," Patricia said, with something like a sob in her voice, which became a pronounced one as she added, "I believe if you hadn't been such a dear, any the less kind . . . She paused. "If you hadn't just always looked at me as if I was as pure as the Virgin Mary, I would have gone. . . . Good-bye!"

She slipped into the saloon and shut the door of it almost

in the little evangelist's face, then ran downstairs to her cabin.

As there was nothing else left for him to do, the bewildered little man went ashore, but not until he had seen all Patricia's luggage removed from the row-boat and deposited in a safe corner on the ship.

When Patricia reached her cabin she rang her bell insistently. When the steward answered it and expressed his surprise at seeing her there, she said almost sharply: "I have changed my mind. I am not going ashore. I shall remain on the ship until we reach Trieste."

"Si, si, signorina!" The man looked genuinely pleased, and his pleasure unconsciously soothed Patricia.

"Will you please tell the purser that my cabin will not be free? . . . I booked my passage to Trieste, but when I paid my bill last night I told him that I was going to break my journey at Athens and come on by a later steamer. But I've since changed my mind."

"Si, si, that will be all right!" the man assured her, "but for the present he is ashore."

Which of course was the reason why Francis Daubigny's urgent telegram had not already been brought to Patricia's cabin.

"I will tell him when he returns," the steward concluded. And that satisfied Patricia, who knew that everyone who possibly could get away went on shore when the ship touched at the ports. "All right," she nodded, but the man still hesitated.

"Does the signorina not wish then to see Athens?" he enquired. "It is a pity!"

"No—I prefer to stay on the ship."

The steward was aware of the new note of harshness in the English girl's usually amiable voice.

"Stop a moment," she said. "If anyone should come on board or send a message to the ship asking for me, say . . ." She paused, considering the most convincing lie. "Just say that I have gone ashore—that I am not on board," she concluded hastily. "You understand? Until we leave the Piræus I don't wish to see anyone."

"I understand, signorina!" As these instructions seemed to promise a fine tip if carried out, the man smiled inwardly, significantly. There had then been more than he had suspected in this going ashore of the English Mees! They were very strange, the Inglesi—their mothers must be mad! But nothing

of these ideas showed on his expressive face. He merely reiterated his comprehension of her wishes and his determination to fulfil them. "Very good, signorina. I will see that you are not disturbed."

"When are we due to leave the Piræus?" Patricia asked him.

"At sharp eleven, signorina."

"Thank you; that is all I want. I will take my lunch in my cabin."

When the door was closed behind the steward and Patricia was alone, she sat down on the edge of her berth and stared straight in front of her. Her fine effort of self-control was fast ebbing away. Her body felt like a wet leaf on a windy day, dammed up in a gutter. She was miles and miles away in that little cabin, infinitely removed from the riot of sunlight and colour outside. Her porthole gave her nothing of it, the ship might have been in a tunnel. Staring vacantly at the berth opposite her she heard nothing of the noise overhead, the tramping of busy deck hands or the racket of unloading cargo. Not once did she hear a strange interpretation of her own name shouted from one end of the ship to the other, from the saloon to the corridors, by the ship's boy who was carrying about Francis Daubigny's telegram, doing his feeble best to deliver it. If she had heard his garbled pronunciation of "Patricia Paget" she would not have recognised it as intended for herself.

After she had sat for some moments thus vacantly staring, in a state of reaction from her previous keyed-up condition, she suddenly came alive, and picking up the pillow from her berth, thumped it and shook it savagely, and then flung it back in its place.

"So that's that!" she cried, as she banged it still harder. "Patricia has again played the complete idiot, flung away the substance for the shadow! Hasn't had sufficient character to lose her character! She is going to remain good because she dares not be bad! That's just about it. That's Patricia Paget!"

Again she sat motionless, with closed eyes. She was so tired, so dreadfully, dreadfully tired, every bit of her! Her body, her head, and her wrathful mind. Her life on the steamer for the last few days had kept her nerves as taut as the strings of a violin tuned to concert pitch. Now, with that strain released, her fatigue was having its own way, devastating her!

Her closed eyes saw things that had not been visible when they were open. The face of the little missionary confronted her, his eyes gazing into hers with their almost childish credulity of expression, their Christlike humility—and he had so little need to be humble, for he was no gentle fool, no poor parson earning his daily bread. He was just that best of all things, a humble scholar following in the footsteps of Jesus, giving all his wealth of goods to feed the poor. And he had "great possessions"!

"And he thought I was pure in heart! The dear little soul thought that! Yes, he said that that was the purity which Jesus loved!"

Patricia dug her nails into the palms of her clenched hands. "Oh, why," she wailed, "do I impose upon nice people? Why do they think me what I am not? Can't they see me as I am? I don't pretend . . . I don't pretend to myself—and that's the worst of all pretending! I am not going to Athens to meet Louis, because I haven't the pluck to be immoral—I haven't the courage to place myself among the social outcasts. I am not going because the temptation to go wasn't big enough—isn't strong enough! There isn't one atom of virtue in my not going, for if it had been Francis whom I was going to meet—I should have flown to him, no boat would have been fast enough!

. . . Yet that dear little bit of human holiness thought I was above suspicion!—Well, dear little soul, I suppose that from now henceforth Patricia Paget will remain what the world calls a virtuous woman! Having failed to be bad, she will remain good. She will get the credit of being good because she hadn't the moral pluck to be bad. Because Louis Tricoupis wasn't Francis Daubigny! Resistance is, after all, merely a matter of temptation, its degree of greatness."

Patricia looked at her watch. "Louis will be making his way to Cook's office now"—she smiled bitterly—"to wait and wait . . ." She paused. "And he will wait until long after the appointed hour, with that perfect good humour of his which is a part of his characteristic philosophy. Yes, he will be very philosophic about it all. Disappointed, of course, because he did want me, but amazingly tolerant and undisturbed. His gay carelessness, his tolerant attitude towards people and life generally won't allow him to grieve. He won't blame me. No," Patricia smiled again, this time more sadly, "he will scarcely even sigh for me. Yet he would have been dear and kind to me about just everything that his ingenuity of mind and abundant wealth could have found to please me." Her eyes visualised the pleasure while they stared at the empty berth opposite her. Their days together on the sunny hills of the old-young world,

their nights in Athens beneath its violet skies. . . . "But he would never even pretend to mourn for me or feel sad. To mourn and feel sad is ungracious, unmindful of the fact that the world is full of beautiful things and adorable women, that there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it."

Although she herself had not played the game, yet it angered Patricia to think that Louis would only pity her, never mourn her. That he would still find the lovely world an enchanting playground, still enjoy it. There were other nymphs than Daphne. No, she was just nothing—nothing—less than nothing to anyone. She did not really matter at all!

Patricia flung herself face downwards on her berth. She pressed her face into her chastened pillow. Like an animal seeking earth, she longed to hide herself in it. She hated the daylight, even the poor sunless daylight of her cabin.

Oh, what a fool she was not to have known that she could never have done it! With the heritage of hundreds of Aunt Harriets in her watery veins, how could she? What a fool she was not to have known that it takes far more courage to be positively bad than negatively good. . . .

But just then the missionary's eyes got between Patricia and the ship's pillow. They said: "You are not good, Patricia, but you weren't quite bad enough to sin against the Spirit of Truth, which is the Holy Ghost. You didn't go because there was no spirit of truth in what you felt for Louis. It was a sham thing . . ."

Then the face of the missionary changed unaccountably into that of Francis Daubigny, into the sunburnt features and gleaming eyes of the Anglo-Arab, and—oh, dash his hawklike eyes! how they had persistently haunted her, done their best to spoil her voyage! How they had pried into her secret being, how they had destroyed her nerves. They had said, oh, so reproachfully: "If only it *was* for *love*, Patricia! Dearest of women, if only it was for *love*! . . ."

But—well, she hadn't gone, anyway! She was here in her dismal little cabin, while poor Hedonist Louis was kicking his heels waiting for her in Cook's Travel Bureau! . . .

How Francis had implored her to be true to her own soul—and she just hadn't got one! Begged her not to commit that gravest of sins . . .

Her thoughts broke off short, she started and trembled. There was a knock at the door, sharp and decisive. She got up and opened it reluctantly.

"Your luggage, signorina."

Already! Then it had never been ashore! That kind little

soul had seen to it. Oh, but he was a dear ! He was a precious memory for ever.

With the ready tact of an Italian the cabin steward pretended not to notice Patricia's tear-stained face, her disordered hair. He put the box back in its accustomed place under the unoccupied berth, and deposited the dressing-case and the suit-case in their old corner. A feeling of desperate finality came over Patricia as she watched him. The blue labels with ATHENS printed on them in big letters came as abrupt reminders of all that she was renouncing.

As the man left the cabin Patricia sat down again on the edge of her berth and stared at the labels, whispering over and over again that word "Athens." She was still mechanically repeating it while her mind dealt with all that it stood for, when once more there came a knock at her door—an extremely gentle and apologetic one this time.

"Come in !" she said, and the door opened quietly, showing the cabin steward, with, behind him, a boy with a telegram in his hand.

"Praego signorina, I am sorry again to disturb you, but I think this is for you——"

Patricia's heart gave a jump, missing a beat. It must be—of course it was—from Louis. After all, then, he had been impatient enough, anxious enough to wire to say that he was coming to fetch her! . . . She took the telegram, and without opening it tore it across and across into fragments.

"It is of no consequence," she said, "and please remember that I will see no one. No one at all ! You won't forget, will you ?"

It was thus that Francis Daubigny's telegram reached its destination.

Two hours later Patricia's luggage was unpacked. Her cabin wore again its human and occupied atmosphere. ~~Patricia~~ surveyed her work with satisfaction. She enjoyed imparting what beauty she could to any place that she inhabited. The tramping overhead had ceased ; then suddenly into the silence of the cabin came the sound of the ship's bell, its noise clanging from the stern of the ship to its bows.

Patricia started and held her breath. The steamer had called in at so many ports in Asia Minor that she had come to know the meaning of the different bells. This loud continuous clanging was the signal for everyone who did not wish to be

carried on to Trieste to go ashore. It was the first warning; presently there would be a second, final one.

A sudden sob rose and choked her. It was like being sea-sick unexpectedly.

Oh, it was awful, that clang, so hatefully definite—the death-knell of pleasure, of delightful company! She was so desperately lonely, so terribly miserable!

She flung herself down on her berth again.

"Oh, let me cry! Please God, for pity's sake, let me cry!" she moaned. "If I don't I shall burst or go mad!"

God allowed her to cry, and she sobbed like a child. Oh, if she had only known what Allah held for her up his wide sleeves! If she had only known what those little scraps of paper lying on her cabin floor could have told her! . . .

She lay like that, with her face pressed close to the wall, her small breasts and strong young limbs flush with it, trying every few minutes to get still closer to it, further away from herself and from all that she had renounced. She was shutting out the daylight, pressing her loneliness closer to the bulwark of the ship, as if it must find contact with something, hurting herself because physical pain was a relief.

She dare not turn her face to the cabin because of those blue labels! She must not see all her belongings in their accustomed places, for that sight stood for renunciation, for that return to London which meant a resumption of the trivial round of her old stupid, empty life. . . . She shivered, and her body was convulsed. Then she lay still again. . . . Just London, without even the dope of her church. Just that old stale, meaningless round of futile things, the old dull emptiness which used to make her envy the girls whom her aunt called "bad," since they at any rate lived! Oh, the deadly waste of it all, made all the deadlier by her awareness of London's splendid life, its passionate throbbing life which she could never reach, whose vibrations used to drive her almost crazy! In a mighty city, full of enormously living human beings, was any girl with money, health and looks ever as dull as she was? As sick to death of just dull respectability? Did anyone else ever know how bored youth can be in that kind of London? Was there anyone anywhere so alone as she was?

She drew her breath and said the words again, slowly: "As alone as I am!" Hadn't she spoken of her lonely London life to the Anglo-Arab, that day of days in the White Synagogue? And hadn't he said to her: "Well, you who know something about loneliness—we both know something about it"—he had not then told her the reason of his own loneliness—"have you ever

thought about the loneliness of Jesus? Have you ever compared your loneliness with His? Have you ever tried to picture to yourself what it would be like to know that there was not a single creature anywhere in the world who understood you, who really grasped what your mind was driving at? Have you ever thought of that kind of loneliness?" Of course she hadn't and she had said so frankly. "I don't suppose I have ever really thought about anyone but myself and my own loneliness!" And he had answered very tenderly—yes, even at Capernaum he had spoken tenderly!—"I like your delicious candour, it's always refreshing. But begin now to try and think, look at it this way. We feel lonely; you and I, because we can't be with people we love, the people who understand us, who enjoy the same things that we enjoy; and that is a pretty bad kind of loneliness. But try to imagine how much ghastlier it would be if there weren't any of these people in our world. If to all intents and purposes you were alone in the world, a unique being."

"But he had His disciples," she reminded him. "Yes, He had His disciples, and they did their best to get at His mind, to grasp the new thoughts He was giving to the world, but it was a materialistic Jewish best. St. Paul, remember, was not among them, or he might have got nearer to it." And then he had finished the conversation by saying in his abstracted, distant manner—that manner which always seemed to block her out of his mind: "After all, there was much truth in what Marie Antoinette said—that the difficulty was not to die for a friend, but to find a friend worth dying for! . . ."

The second bell sounded. The last warning. In a few moments the gangway would be hauled up, the people who had been sent off the steamer would be seated in the small boats which were moving away from the wash of the propellers, going ashore.

Patricia raised herself up just enough to pull the dark green blind across her porthole.

She would never see the Parthenon. That bell had settled that fact all right. She was not to sit with Louis under the shadow of its columns while he told her classic tales of Arcady. He was not going to have the chance to develop her mind until it was "worthy of her lovely body." Patricia writhed as she recalled this expression.

Yes, she had drawn the blind across the window so as to block out the sunshine of Greece which was at last finding its

way into the cabin, telling her in its pagan and callous manner that she was an idiot, laughing at her timidity, calling her to come out and play.

She sank back again on to her berth. This time she was pressing her fingers into her pretty ears, trying to shut out the sound of the loud good-byes which were being called up to the passengers on the deck by shore-going friends in the small boats. But she heard it all. Oh, why couldn't she shut it all out, the familiar shipboard life she knew so well, and the beautiful Louis Tricoupi, waiting for her at Cook's office? Why should she be able to obliterate the real Greek sunshine by just pulling a little blind across her porthole, and yet be powerless to shut out the unreal—the white marble of the Parthenon, sparkling like snow? Why couldn't her closed eyes shut out the sunburnt face of the Anglo-Arab? That was the thing that angered her most of all. With her eyes tight shut and the daylight screened by the green blind, that unreal world was far more real than the world of actualities. . . . But what was reality? What had ever been more real, more alive, more persistent in her life than her awareness of that damned "little spark"?

Patricia pushed her head under her pillow. She just would get away from it! Just wouldn't make a weak idiot of herself! It had made her break her word to Louis. It had made her chase up the gangway stairs like a frightened hen—and she had never even thought of going up it, of turning back on her adventure, and mounting those beastly steps again. She had never imagined that she would break her word! No, never, never. She had never thought for one moment that she would be such a fool. Whatever had made her do it? What on earth had come over her? . . .

She drew her breath. Was it that damned little spark? Oh, was it? Was it anything that Francis could admire in her? Or was it just her lack of courage, her want of nerve?

The anchor was being weighed. Patricia listened to the rattle of the chain while her objective self tried not to hear it. She dreaded the final bang on the deck. . . .

Now the ship was beginning to turn and churn the water, to back and go forward and then go back again. . . . With her head still below the pillow, Patricia could see the white surf it was creating in the blue sea, she could tell exactly what was going on, feel it through all her illumined sensitivity.

A few minutes later the ship was on its way, moving slowly

and smoothly forward. With a fine commercial disregard for beauty, it was leaving Greece, turning its back on the youth of the world, eager to exchange the playground of the gods for the mass production of commerce.

Never would Patricia be chased by Apollo, never would his pleasure-ground be hers. Never, no, never, would Louis make love to her in the "City of the violet crown"!

She dug her nails into the soft flesh of her palms. She stretched out her limbs and body until they felt like taut elastic. With her aging face pressed close to the wall of the cabin, she cried: "O God, make it worth while! Dear Nazaraina, with your tragic eyes, implore your beloved Virgin Mother to have pity on her lonely child."

FINIS

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